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"My Burden is Light."

A SERMON

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Matthew xi : 29.

THIS is part of Christ's invitation to the weary and heavy-laden. At first the whole passage strikes us strangely, for it is an *invitation* to put on a yoke and take up a burden; and this should correct an error in this modern theory of a religious life without burdens. Accepting the inspired metaphor of a pilgrimage, yet we so modify it to accord with modern improvements in travel that the way to Zion, where the old saint walked with scrip and staff along sharp precipices or down into valleys where wild torrents roared, seems now a nicely graded road—the Slough of Despond bridged—the Hill Difficulty tunneled—along which the jubilant tourist is borne in a whirl of sensation, in a "palace-car," reclining on downy cushions, reading romances, regaled with luxuries, and having a gay time of it generally. Now, we are not thinking to question the truth that the way of holiness is pleasant (we shall see to that presently); we are only insisting on the serious fact which our Lord sets forth in the text—that in a Christian life *there are burdens to be carried*.

And these burdens are manifold.

(a) There is a burden for the intellect—a load of mysteries in the great doctrines to be believed, which demand the bowing down of man's carnal reason in profound submission to the Infinite Wisdom. While there is in them nothing repugnant to reason, there is in them much that is above reason; and yet for them all there must be a cordial faith, and the man of the most ambitious intellect must receive them as a little child, not because he can understand, but because Jehovah has spoken! *Unquestionably, Christianity has a burden of doctrine.*

(b) Meantime, as manifestly it has a *burden of duties*. Verily, as set forth by Christ, His discipleship was not a May-game, but a warfare; and so long as the child of God remains only partially sanctified, Christian life must be a battle with sin within and Satan without. And when we look back upon the lives

of old saints, and see Abraham with his terrible sacrifice, and Daniel cast to the lions, and Paul in his bonds and imprisonment, and John in his lonely exile, we not only see that Christ imposes a burden, but at first almost fail to see how "*that burden is light.*"

And yet such are Christ's words, and should serve to correct the opposite error of those who will have it that the ways of sin are pleasant, and those of wisdom only painful; who, not satisfied with wearing the easy yoke of Christ, are ever insisting on making the way to heaven a harder journey—paying freight on "extra baggage" of Pharisaism, and dragging heavy weights of sorrowful self-righteousness down through the Slough of Despond and up the Hill Difficulty; whose book of exodus records only the bitter waters of Marah, and the giants of Amalek, and the burning sands, and the fiery-flying serpents, without one word of thankfulness about the sweetening branch, and the heavenly manna, and the many blessed resting-places, with their green palms and bright waters, and the fiery, cloudy pillar, making the whole exodus a glory and a gladness; and who will have it that the great Shepherd of Israel hath opened all ways of pleasantness, through green pastures and beside still waters, to bears and lions, the foul monsters of iniquity, and delights to lead his chosen sheep down through the awful valley of the Shadow of Death.

Now, this blasphemous error our text serves to correct, asserting that while there are offenses to be endured and crosses to be borne in following the Master, yet it ever remains true that "*Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light.*"

This, then, is our theme to-day; and in considering it you will perceive several distinct points in our Lord's logic.

First: There is a thought of strong contrasts.

The text is not addressed to blissful and untroubled souls, but to men already weary and heavy-laden. And the point made is, that, compared with the sorrows and sufferings which sinful men endure, all these burdens of the believer are easy and light; and so indeed they are.

1. Take *this burden of doctrine*—the things we have already admitted that are beyond our understanding, and therefore hard to believe, in Divine Revelation, and we say that if you compare them with the hard things which the rejecter of the Bible accepts as true, the burden imposed on the intellect is exceedingly light. Begin with the fundamental contrast of atheism with theism, and tell me which is easiest to believe—that a personal God made all things, or that all things made themselves? To believe that an infinite, self-existent, all-glorious Spirit—a simple, unrevealed, incomprehensible, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, omni-operative essence or being such as all men in all times have more or less conceived of and be-

lieved in—that such a self-existing Spirit, in order that there might be objects whereon to lavish infinite love and reveal infinite glories, did (humanly to speak) "*distribute Himself*," working out His own beautiful and glorious thoughts in the forms and sounds, the systems and harmonies of the universe, and rounded this fair earth into beauty, and hung it amid the stars as the dwelling-place of a happy race made in his own image, whether, I ask, difficult, transcendental as this is, it be yet as hard to believe as that a chaos of dead matter, which had tossed about inert from all eternity, did at once become suddenly, and without cause, emulous of doing wonders, and omnipotent to do, and omniscient to know how to do, through certain mystic affinities, organizing a material universe, and by means of occult chemistries developing spiritual hierarchies, glorious intellects, a result of sea-water acting on sponges, and transcendent affections, produced by acids irritating brain-fibre; whether, in short, it is easier to believe that Nature, a wild wolf-nurse, has trained gibbering gorillas into glorious beings, aspiring to heavenly kingdoms and thrones, yet only to find in this magnificent universe a monstrous Aceldama, or that Almighty God, a tender and loving Father, is bringing many sons unto Glory to dwell in His home and inherit His Kingdom! We cannot pursue this thought; we only ask you to consider it at your leisure, assured that you will agree with us at last that all the hard things accepted by Christian faith are as nothing to these harder things believed by the infidel; so that he who rejects the Bible because it contains mysteries, proves himself thereby a very Pharisee of the Pharisees—"straining at a gnat, but swallowing a camel."

2. Passing this, take, secondly, *the burden of duties*—the things hard to do, or painful to endure in a Christian life, and you will find that, in contrast with those experienced in the ways of ungodliness, "*Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light*."

Take the principles which govern the men of this world, and are productive of more delight than those to which a child of God yields obedience—for example, (a) take the code of *honor*, that system which regulates man's treatment of his fellow-man. Now, Christianity says, "Love your enemies," "*Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you*," and do you think this a hard requirement? *You do!* Well, so do I. There is no doubt about it. To repress the fire that blazes in the eye at a gross insult, and relax the hand strongly clenched for a blow, and turn away from an insolent enemy with a gentle look and word amid the pity and contempt of a world for our seeming cowardice,—verily, this is a burden which upon a brave heart presses heavily, *heavily*. But then think of the contrast!—this

code of honor which says, Hate your enemy, Avenge your every wrong! If a man smite thee on the cheek, kill him, *kill him!* And now, look! Two men have met with weapons of death! Yesterday they were friends! But, in a moment of passion there was a rude word and a blow, and then this deadly encounter! And they *part*—how? See! Pressing down the bloody turf there lies the form of a dead man, his pale face turned upward to the blue heavens. And see the man who slew him, fleeing in terror, cursed and Cain-like, hated by the living, haunted by the dead, until every water of earth gives back as a mirror that victim's face, and every wind of heaven wails out or whispers his dying cry! And do you call that *easier*?

Or take (b) the code of *pleasure*! Christianity says, "Flee youthful lusts;" "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup." And is this requirement hard? Well, it seems so sometimes. When the young and joyous gather, sinful pleasures allure, and the eye blazes, and the heart bounds, and you are just lifting to your parched lips the cup of delirious delight—then, just then, to put it resolutely away, to dash it bravely to the ground—this does seem a hard Christian requirement. But then, is the law of unholy pleasure easier? "Let us have a good time of it! Let us forget God and eternity, and be merry! Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" And I ask, is all this easier and happier? Why, look yonder! See a man whom sinful pleasure hath transformed into a monster! As the Egyptian Queen dissolved the rarest pearl of her regalia, so hath he gathered into one sparkling draught all that can make life a blessing. He holds the awful chalice in his hand, and though therein have been melted a father's honor, and a mother's love, and a wife's suffering, and a child's shame—yea, dissolved in it is the imperial jewel of a higher life the soul's "pearl of great price"—yet, in the frenzy of that tremendous lust, he will lift that awful cup to his lips, and drink, and die! And do you call this an easier yoke and a lighter *burden*?

But you say, Christ sometimes has laid on his disciples a much heavier burden. Be it so. Take the heaviest of them all—martyrdom!—martyrdom in its most appalling aspects! Look yonder! The ruthless Inquisitor of Spain has seized his victim! See that fair patrician girl in all her matchless loveliness, turning away from the fair earth and the pleasant sun, and the loving ministries of her blessed home, and led forth by armed men and bound by iron chains to the terrible stake, and in the midst of the roaring flame to endure all the agonies of such a death for Christ! Verily, this does seem a hard yoke—a heavy burden. It does! It does! Christ's bitter cup! Christ's fiery baptism!

But then consider the contrast! *Sin*, too, hath its martyrdoms, a thousand to one in number, and ineffably heavier. I need not tell you what and where they are. They are all around you this day. Years ago there sat in yonder house of God a fair young child; and when her mother brought her to the altar-side and the baptismal water fell on her bright forehead, and when later, in growing childhood, she came up on bounding feet to the sanctuary, and I heard her singing the sweet song, "I want to be an angel!"—my whole heart went out in benediction, and she seemed to me almost blessed as one of God's angels. But years afterward I saw her dying! Now haggard, desolate, despairing—the *past* torturing with its memories of a father's wounded spirit, a mother's broken heart; the *future* terrible with ghostly phantoms, a hopeless immortality! And thus in ineffable and convulsed agonies her spirit passed away! And then see the contrast—the flames that flashed round the young Christian martyr seemed blessed as the horses of fire that bore the prophet to glory.

Look yonder! A form is sitting in the gloom of a prison-house! He was once the favorite of fortune, flattered by the multitude—the idol of the household, his home a palace, his life a brilliant dream. But temptations gathered round him. Wild passions swept his spirit as mighty winds the sea, and to-day the guilt of a brother's blood is on his soul, and before him the terrors of an infamous and hopeless death! Look again! There is the grave of a suicide. On his early life fell the blight of disappointment, and instead of fleeing to Christ for consolation, he yielded at once to despair, and cut from these mortal moorings, like a phantom bark disappearing amid cloud and flame, swept outward to the doom of a hopeless immortality.

But I will not dwell on illustrations like these. The world is full of them. Human life is crowded with forms of ineffable agony endured by spirits which have turned away from Christian life because it seemed sorrowful. The martyrdoms of Satan are a thousand to one for all martyrdoms for Jesus! And as, in the blessed contrast, I listened in fancy to the death-song of the Christian, as it rose on the surges of flame and floated away through heaven as a trumpet-peal of victory, then verily Christ's yoke even of martyrdom seemed easy. I blessed God for the fire. I say, then, that even self considered, and all other things being equal, the yoke and burden of sin are heavier than any which the believing soul carries for the Master. But then, mark you, other things are not equal. Our text implies and indicates mighty differences. For here is,

Secondly, a thought of strong assistance.

Christ calls it *His* yoke—His own burden even when partially laid on the disciple. The metaphor is just that which

Paul uses, a "*yoke-fellowship*." The thought is, that Christ will help His disciples bear even their lighter burdens. Every grace of the new life is only another power for the service—an angel in Gethsemane with a gift of strength. So it comes to pass even naturally.

Love and hope—how mighty they render us! See yon weary pilgrim; how his flagging feet bound again as from the hill-side he catches a view of his cottage in the vale below! See yon woman in her feebleness; how like a giant she rushes into that burning house as she hears her child cry! Thus even natural feelings strengthen. But in Christian experience there is more than this. There is the supernatural power of a new life. We can do all things through Christ strengthening us.

We have no time now for the argument, but the world abounds with its illustration. The Christian takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods. The bereaved mourner lays the dead darling into the pitiless grave without murmuring. The dying saint feels the cold hand of death breaking his heart-strings, yet the while his eyes flash with heavenly light, and the secret of the wonder is, Jesus, the Master, is lifting the burden, making the load light. And oh! how full the history of God's people is of this touching truth! See the face of Stephen, even in that martyr's agony, as the face of an angel! Hark to the voice of Paul filling all the Philippian dungeon as with a great shout of victory! See the flashing eyes of John as he wanders over the desolate rock of Patmos! And what does it all mean? Why, only that Jesus is helping the over-weighted pilgrim to bear the great load.

Oh, heart-touching metaphor—Christ our yoke-fellow! And the same thought runs through all the inspired rhetoric. Christ is my "*shield*," my "*high rock*." But how does a shield protect me? By receiving upon its own broad bosom the arrow aimed at my heart. How does a rock shelter me? Only by enduring for me the fury of the billow and the blast. And therefore, if Christ be my Saviour, He not only *hath* borne my sins, but He *does* every day bear my sorrows. It is just as if He were even now weeping tears for me, enduring my agonies, dying my death. And so let the load which comes upon my poor, weak, sinful soul be terrible as it may, if I only hear the footstep of my gracious Master, I know that He comes to lift off my burden, and thus I experience another part of this text's meaning—my burden is really His burden, and therefore is light. There is a point even beyond all this. We have here,

Thirdly, a thought of evanescence—of brevity.

Throughout Christ's whole argument runs this thought of the future: "Ye SHALL find rest to your souls." As Paul puts it, "*These light afflictions which are for a moment*," and therefore trifling just because they are transient. And this,

after all, is the main point. Let the Christian's yoke be heavy as it may, *it is only for a season*, while the burden of unforgiven *sin* is forever and ever. The ungodly man carries his burden with him to eternity. The evil passion, as an undying worm, must torture him forever. But not so to the Christian. Let his load be what it may, death, death loosens it forever. There is no sin in heaven, and therefore there can be there neither suffering nor sorrow. They bear no burdens when the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne leads them through green pastures and beside still waters. The broad journeyings of a blissful soul through eternity are not of a pilgrim plodding on with weary feet, but rather those of a freed spirit mounting on exalting wings. And then, then! when like a freed bird, having cast off the burden of the flesh, it soars through the clouds and the rainbows that span the clouds, having warbled its sweet song round the eternal throne, it casts itself upon the bosom of infinite love, then, blessed be God, in the ineffable bliss of that divine rest and rapture it will find the full meaning of the text, that "*Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light.*"

Now this is the text's logic, simple as a child's, yet strong as an archangel's! And its great force is an invitation—Christ invites all poor, burdened, sinful souls to Himself with this blessed argument! "*Come*"—"Come, come, for my burden is light."

So my last words are unto the impenitent. We urge you to become Christians, not that you may take up but may cast off burdens. I know that some Pharisaic Christians will have it that they suffer great things for Christ, and they tell us how Paul often spoke of his own sore afflictions and tribulations endured for his Master. But we insist that Paul never puts the thing in this way. He does indeed speak of his manifold trials, and in words which, if uttered by one of those woe-begone disciples in plaintive tones and dramatic style, would melt a heart of stone. "Perils"—perils in waters; among robbers; by the heathen; in the wilderness; among false brethren; thrice beaten of rods; once stoned; three times shipwrecked; in weariness and painfulness; in hunger and thirst: in prisons frequent, in deaths oft—verily here are trials, and if Paul had rendered the recitation in the latest style, interjecting "Oh's!" and "*Ah me's!*" and "*Alas's!*" wringing his hands and rolling up his eyes as he walked backward and forward before them, would not the good people of Corinth have made a fuss over him as an overworked and a maltreated, persecuted, dear old saint, and sent him abroad at the church's charges to recruit himself among the sunny isles of Greece or the grand highlands of Macedonia? But this was not Paul's style; he was recounting his manifold trials as things that had done him

good and wherein he only gloried—as some mighty warrior, in exalting disdain of some passing annoyance he had felt in the triumphant press of the battle!

In the full strength and at the lofty height of his joyous Christian life he speaks of these tribulations as working out present Christian graces and future Christian glories—as if from the very gate of Heaven, casting a brief glance downward upon all that troublous sea of conflict and agony, "*These light afflictions which are but for a moment!*" and then lifting his jubilant hands and flashing eyes upward, crying, "*That far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*" Oh, no—no—no! Paul never thought of the cross of Christ as something very heavy to bear as he followed his Master! And these men only slander my dear Lord when they tell you that religion makes men sorrowful, that His burdens are heavy. They are only a tree's burden of branches, a bird's burden of wings. And tell me, O oak, standing as a diadem on yonder mountain-top, are your magnificent branches a heavy burden? O eagle, soaring in your pride of place, are your mighty pinions a burden? And yet such only are Christ's burdens. Here on the earth only a consoling overflow of grace, and yonder in Heaven only the blessed weight of white robes and bestarred crowns—"A great weight of glory!" Oh, poor, weary, laboring, heavy-laden sinner, come, come to Christ, not to be burdened, but to be blessed! You have come to God's house this Sabbath morning laboring and heavy-laden, burdened with life's common cares and anxieties. You are troubled about your business; you have lost property; you have lost dear friends; your bright hopes are withered; your brave hearts break!

Do not tell me that your life of sin is pleasant. Do not tell me that you are happy without Christ! I know better! Turn those bright eyes up to me! Ah! There are unshed tears in them! Your cup of joy is a cup of trembling. In the veriest riot and rapture of the dance and wine you are discontent, disconsolate. Over your couch of repose hangs suspended the glittering sword. Along the wall, over against the banquet, comes forth a phantom hand writing fiery words of doom! You want comfort, you want rest, and Jesus, my gracious Master, He alone can give them, and He is here to give them. Come to Him—oh, come to Him! And here, amid all these earthly sorrows, you shall have wonderful consolation! And there, there! above and beyond! oh! there before the eternal throne, in the midst of the golden city, exulting in the fellowship of the crowned creatures of the higher life, your brow all aflame with the diadem, your face in all heavenly beauty as the face of an angel, yours shall be the endless, ineffable, ever-increasing rapture and rest of the risen, reigning Spirit!

The Moral Crisis.

A DISCOURSE

By Père Hyacinthe, AT THE WINTER CIRCUS, PARIS;

[Translated by Rev. Leonard Woolsey Bacon.]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: We reach to-day the end of this series of discourses. I do but act as your interpreter in tendering your thanks to the zealous and enterprising organizer of these great meetings, and the distinguished and obliging gentlemen who have presided over them.

I must thank yourselves, also, for the support you have given me by your presence and sympathy. This encouragement, if I have rightly understood it, is accorded more especially to my sincerity, and in this regard I do not fear to say that I am deserving of it.

I may deceive myself, gentlemen, but I would deceive no one else; and in the course of a life which, more perhaps in appearance than in reality, has been wanting in unity, I have at every successive juncture borne faithful witness to what I believed to be true and right. But your plaudits rise far above my mere personality. They greet in me two grand causes, of which I am but the humble champion—freedom of conscience and religious reform. Freedom of conscience, of which our honorable president has but now spoken with an eloquence which has perhaps affected me more deeply than any other of his hearers, I will add nothing on this point to what he has said.

As to religious reform, I very well know that this phrase will not convey to all of you precisely the same meaning as to myself; but I think I make no mistake in saying that the great majority of this audience recognizes in it a duty which becomes every day more urgent, in view at once of the future of Christianity and of the future of the country.

It is to your kindness that I owe this welcome on my return to my native land and to the privilege of public speech. I thank you for it. It will be my endeavor to make use of this privilege, and at the same time to serve my country. I do not know under what form this work will go forward; for really we have been beginning a work here, a work of reform, as I have said, consequently a work of progress; and at the same time, because it is a work of reform, and because it is a work of progress—a work also of conservation and of religious and social reconciliation—I do not know under what form this work will go forward; but I do know this, that, with God's help and your help, go forward it will.

To come now to my subject—the Moral Crisis.

If I were to define in a single word the moral crisis in which we are involved, I should say that it is the struggle between religious morality and a morality purely human—or, to call them by their right names, between Christian morality and independent morality.

You see it at a glance, the moral crisis is closely bound up with the religious crisis, and at bottom they are one and the same. Accordingly, I cannot treat my subject without speaking of both at once. I repeat once more, I shall discuss no religious dogma whatever—the law forbids it to me. I shall take sides on no political question. I am not competent to do it, and were I competent, I have no sort of disposition for it. I intend, nevertheless, to treat the moral question in all its religious and social amplitude, and accordingly I boldly take my stand with you on the ground of social philosophy. For these two adversaries are still too much abstractions—Christian Morality and Independent Morality. Behold them now taking bodily form in the two powers, of which the one calls itself Theocracy, the other Democracy. Religious morality is preeminently the form of God's supremacy upon earth. For God rules not like earthly monarchs, by arbitrary edicts or by political institutions, but by truth and righteousness, imposed primarily upon individual consciences, and through these upon the entire social order. But the representatives of religious morality too often confound their own personal dominion with that of the invisible Sovereign. This is theocracy, or, to speak more exactly, the abuse of theocracy. There arises a great outcry against the trade in consciences—against the domination of priests! But—let me be just, in face of the prejudices of the age—one excess provokes its opposite. The theorists of absolute liberty assert that democracy—their democracy—is incompatible with any authority superior to man, incompatible even with the Decalogue; so that it is no longer against the abuses of religion that they are pitted, but against the sovereignty and even the very conception of God. Such are the extravagances of democracy as opposed to those of theocracy.

You see now what is the nature of that perilous crisis upon which we have entered, chiefly within the last thirty years, and in which we are becoming every day more and more deeply involved. I agree with the enemies of the Roman theocracy—to call it by name—in recognizing it as a danger, an immense danger. But the means proposed for averting this danger, when they are not iniquitous or absurd, seem to me simply ineffective. I would like to bring you to see this with me.

Three principal solutions of the social-religious problem have been proposed—the first by scientific men, the other two

by statesmen. The suppression by science of Christian morality, and in a way more general still of religion itself, this is the first solution. Separation of Church and State, in the sense of separation between society and religion, this is the second solution. And finally—we need hardly discuss it, for it does not deserve discussion—the subjection to the State of the conscience and the Church.

When I have disposed of these three solutions you will not expect me, at least not now, to present my own. Mine would be directly religious, and I must remind you once more that I am not now at liberty to touch upon religion. But the inadequacy of other solutions will demonstrate at once the need of a better.

To resume. The scientific suppression of religious morality and even of religion itself. This I know is not the claim of all modern thinkers, but of such only as are more or less closely allied with a great school which we in France name *Positivist*, and which our neighbors across the Channel call, with a shade of difference perhaps, *Secularist*.

Some are surprised that in speaking of philosophy in my first discourse I did not even mention this school. It is because that, in my view, philosophy is nothing if not metaphysical, and the school in question denies metaphysics. Outside of experimental science it is skeptical. You know the theory of Auguste Comte and his disciples concerning what they call the development of the religious idea in human nature. They take man at the outset, when he is painfully extricating himself from the age-long grasp of mere animal existence and beginning to experience new wants, indicative at once of his greatness and of his weakness—those “growing pains” through which he must needs pass, but from which it will cost him so much to recover. To start with, they find him prostrate before his fetish. Later on, he rises into a domestic or patriotic polytheism, more enlightened, more generous, sometimes, as in Greece or Rome, even splendid. He advances still, impelled by the inexorable law of progress, and attains at length the heights of Christian monotheism. There, by virtue of its comparative elevation and purity, the religious idea undergoes a radical transformation. It ceases to be theological and becomes philosophic, and under this more humane form it continues to reign over the world of thought until effete metaphysics pass over to join the company of worn-out religions, and give place to the positive conception of the world, the final and settled condition of the human mind, in which the problems of the origin and end of things are recognized for what they are in truth, insoluble. If the human mind is absolutely and essentially impotent to find a solution for these problems, why should it persist in putting them?

There, according to the Positivists, lies the limit of civilization. Educated minds have reached it already, by progress slow but sure, and which is now beginning to rush headlong; the Western nations are nearing it every day, and consequently the true method of solving the religious question under all its forms, as well in the social order as in the scientific, is not to attack it directly, but to allow to it instead all the time necessary (and it needs no very long time) to find its own natural solution.

Meanwhile, all the efforts of men of progress should be concentrated upon this principal and double point to popularize and secularize education. To popularize it, to extend it by all possible measures, and make it penetrate to the lowest strata of society—on this point I am heart and soul with the Positivists; and to secularize it—here I make my reservations, large reservations—to secularize it, that is, to break the last remaining ties that connect it with religion.

Unhappily for itself, Positivism, which in theory condemns all hypothesis, makes, after all, very frequent use of it. It assumes to rest wholly upon facts, even when these make against itself. I will not here insist, as regards the theoretical part of the system, that, so far from following a course that leads necessarily upward, the manifestations of the religious sentiment often seem to obey a law of decay and degeneration; that, according to the more and more decided testimony of modern science, the most ancient period of the great Oriental religions presents a character far more elevated and purer than the later ones. Neither will I insist upon the marked exception of the monotheism of the Hebrews, which contradicts all idea of the natural development of mankind, and sets itself across the path of history as a moral miracle. No! I prefer to take my stand at the present epoch on the practical point which we are discussing. What! You assert that religion is just making its exit from the stage of history, when in reality, not content with simply holding her own against all attacks, she is making advances with growing energy and success! Look back to the beginning of this century, and see all forms of religious society quivering as under the breath of a new inspiration; everything taking on fresh vigor, in the sphere of labor as well as of thought; on all sides agitation, and the conflict becoming every day more fiery between beliefs and negations. Are these the signs of a power just vanishing away? But at this very moment what are these politics of yours, good or bad, from one end of Europe to the other? At Paris as at Berlin, at Madrid as at Rome, at Constantinople as at St. Petersburg, what is the profoundly knotty point—the tough, inextricable and sometimes bloody—of all political questions, if it is not precisely this same matter of

religion of which we are told that it is just giving up the ghost?

O ho! you are in such a hurry to have done with abstractions, and all the time you have missed the facts, and the first of all facts, the fact of your own nature! You have not understood that religion, whatever its form or its origin—grave questions on which I do not for the moment insist—that religion, were it eradicated from science, would find a sure refuge in human nature. You have failed to see that what makes the difference between the man and the brute is not speech alone, but also his burning, ceaseless interest in things beyond the grave. Look at the brute, our "lowly brother," as St. Francis of Assisi calls him, he also encounters the problem of existence. He wanders sometimes in the freedom of the forest and the desert; he passes anon under the bondage of civilized society. He becomes acquainted with toil, with suffering; he is confronted at last with death. But what calmness, I had almost said, what majesty, in this being that observes all the laws which we violate, observes them without intelligence, it is true, but without constraint also, under the ever constant impulse of his magnificent instinct! Such, then, is the brute. But what distinguishes us from him is this, that coming into this world and finding ourselves under sentence of death, we long to have this death give back to us in some other form the life which it takes away, and whether we will or no, unless we do violence to our nature, we keep coming back to this eternal problem. In a justly famous work, M. Pelletan, some years ago, uttered this phrase, which is as well worth remembering under the republic as under the empire: "We have had to take materialistic philosophy to the point of softening of the brain."* But even when one has not softened his brain by materialism nor by skepticism, he has not yet done with the problem of the hereafter. And so it is that, how narrow and dark soever may sometimes be the inner recesses of the human conscience, there remains always a door of hope; as the prophet says, "I will give her in the valley of Achor a door of hope."† There remains always a door which opens upon the forbidden world; death alone can altogether close or open it, but life leaves it ajar. Is it the door of reason—a reason superior to all reasonings? Is it the door of madness—a fatal madness? Does it open on a road that we may tread, or on an abyss into which we plunge? However this may be, an irresistible charm, an attraction sometimes gentle and sometimes terrible, brings back to this point the most powerful intellects, the thinker, the man of science, the poet, the deep souls who have known life in its two higher manifestations, of love and grief—the members of the human race that seem the feeblest, but are in truth the strongest, the

* "*La Nouvelle Babylone*," p. 242.

† Hosea ii : 15.

woman and the child, and that marvellous compound of the woman's and the child's nature—the people! And here meet, mingle and clash the adorations and the blasphemies, the hopes and the terrors, the loves and the hatreds of humanity, religious or impious. This, then, is the opening which it is beyond the power of science to close, because nature, mightier than science, has cut it deep in our very being; this is the door by which it keeps coming back in spite of everything—that spectre that you are trying to exorcise—the spectre of the absolute. Yes, the spectre! not now the mysterious, but luminous and salutary vision presented by spiritual Christianity, but the fantastic, grotesque and hurtful spectre, conjured up by superstition and fanaticism.

The men who claim to represent science have asserted the absolute incompetency of human reason in matters of faith, and by an echo which has not been slow in replying to them, the men who claim to represent faith have proclaimed the same incompetency. The formulas are alike; it is only the conclusions that are different. The conclusion of positive or skeptical science is the absolute independence of the mind. The conclusion of superstitious or fanatical religion is the absolute submission, the blind obedience of the mind. Henceforth no more religion whose mission shall be to give inspiration to science! No more science whose mission shall be (I do not hesitate to say the word) to maintain a watchful control over religion! In those Middle Ages which we need not seek to bring back, but which we ought to judge with equity, yes, and whose work we ought to carry forward with intelligence—in those great ages that have been so traduced by their apologists, even more than by their adversaries—there was in every university of Europe a central and supreme science—the science of theology. Sprung from the intimate union of reason and revelation, half human, half divine, theology exercised an acknowledged sway over church authority itself to prevent it from lapsing into despotism or tyranny. The history of our great University of Paris is a monument of the fact. Theology forbade the traditions of orthodoxy from degenerating first into formalism and then into Pharisaism. It held back popular piety from slipping down the perilous incline of semi-paganism. We have no theology nowadays. Doubtless the blame of this lies with Ultramontaniam, which is incapable of retaining anything of theology but the name; how could a real theology be compatible with papal absolutism and infallibility? But the fault is quite as much with the tendency to positivism and skepticism. In one way or the other religion has been given up to the blind enthusiasm of the multitude eager for morbid superstitions, or to the impotent caprice of a man, who seems to lead, but is himself either led or driven.

Of old time there were great heights—God has ever loved the heights—there were high mountains on which He revealed Himself to man. Here it was, amid the thunderings and the lightnings, that He said I AM THAT I AM, and human philosophy can do no more than comment on that great Name. There it was that His Son died upon the cross, pouring out his blood, and lifting up His prayer for the redemption of all the guilty, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Now, just in proportion as superstition puts itself into the place of true religion, the people will go no more to Sinai nor to Calvary; they will scatter abroad as sheep without a shepherd, under the shadow of nobody knows what mountains, hunting for no one can tell what apparitions, listening for words not to be commented on, for they are an insult at once to the Heaven whence they pretend to come forth, and the earth which refuses to give ear to them.

The first solution, then, is inadequate—nay, it has aggravated the problem instead of solving it. The cry has been “Science, nothing but science, and let faith vanish away!” And faith has undergone a change, but religion has become, in some sense, stronger still, and by just so much more ruinous as it has become confused with fanaticism.

From the misguided hands of the men of science the problem passes to the hands of men of affairs—statesmen, legislators, rulers; and there have emerged these two solutions corresponding with the two great schools which share between them—happily in most unequal portions—the affairs of our time—the school of liberty and the school of authority. The Liberal school frankly declares for the separation of Church and State; the Authoritarian school tends more and more, but without venturing to own it, towards the subjection of Church to State.

I have no occasion to study in itself the grave question of the separation of Church and State. The only point at present is this: does it offer a solution to the religious and social crisis? I boldly answer, No. It may be legitimate, desirable, necessary even—I need not decide on these points. I only declare that it is incompetent of itself to put an end to the conflict between theocracy and democracy.

The separation of Church and State is one of those magical words the charm of which is not unattended with danger, because, although applied to just ideas, generous sentiments, needful reforms, it too often includes within its vague boundaries chimerical or contradictory conceptions. There is another formula which the great Italian statesman Cavour added to the vocabulary of Europe, but which he borrowed, as he himself acknowledged, from the most catholic pen of Montalembert—the phrase *Free Church in Free State*. Is the separation of Church and State another expression of the same idea? Does

it imply an adjustment of boundaries between Church and State, neither devised by trickery nor imposed by force, but dictated by reason and justice? Religious questions for the Church, political questions for the State; the State for the citizens, the Church for the believers. Louis XIV. said, "I am the State." We say, in these times, *We are the State*—we as citizens; and, *We are the Church*—we as believers. And we must have the liberty of free self-development in both of these spheres of activity. We must have nothing to fear, as citizens, from the excommunications of the Church, and as believers we must have nothing to dread from the injunctions of the State.

If the separation of Church and State expresses and realizes this mutual independence of the domain of faith and the domain of law, it is a great and needful step forward, and although we have not yet reached the goal, we are nearing it day by day.

But by separation of Church and State has often been understood the systematic mutual ignoring of the Church by the State and the State by the Church. I have even heard this definition attributed to a man for whose noble genius and large soul I have unbounded respect. I do not myself believe it to be Vinet's; at most it is the expression of some imprudent follower of his. In order that State and Church could ignore each other, nothing short of a total separation between religion and society would suffice. Heaven and earth cannot be put asunder. For the abode of man is needed this habitable and fertile globe, and around and over all, reflected in the atmosphere, the light and immensity of space. So in the moral world we need the earth, this noble earth of the home and the commonwealth, the sphere of our social activity, but also around, above, within, those mighty atmospheric currents, elevating, purifying, the aspirations and inspirations of the infinite.

Tell me, I pray, how can a Church—I do not say the Catholic Church only, but any Church—how can a Church consent to ignore the State, that is, in the widest and latest sense of the word, the country, society, the sum of those relations of justice and beneficence which unite mankind, and which it is the very mission of religion to guard, purify and develop?

At birth, marriage, death, the three chief events of human life, religion interposes with three solemn sacraments, and you bid it ignore the family! What! Ignore the family, which is the product of religion—our own religion—of religion that gave us our wives and our mothers! I know, indeed, that the Roman woman, the German woman, the Celtic woman have brought each her glorious contingent; but what has made the French woman the Christian woman is the Gospel, yes, and the Church. And you would have the Church ignore the family!

Ignore the State, ignore civil society, when religion (if we do but comprehend its noble function), so far from limiting itself to a mystical or ascetic morality, or shutting itself up under the splendid vaults of its cathedrals, there to display the poetry of its music and its ritual, has to preach social morality to society as well as private morality to the individual! When, without having anything to do with political parties, it has to say to the citizen, in this age of universal suffrage and universal conscription, "Weigh well your vote with a citizen's earnestness and conscientiousness before dropping it into the ballot-box; consecrate your blood with a martyr's heroism before shedding it on the battle-field."

Ignore the State, when it is religion that must teach the nations to respect the rulers of their own choosing, the laws of their own making! It is hard to respect the powers we have made ourselves. But the Christian is capable of seeing in the man or the law at once the creation of popular suffrage and the consecration of eternal justice. And you, rulers and legislators, learn to honor the justice which you administer, to honor the people whom you govern. Such is true religion.

And then as to the State. You would have the State ignore the Church, which is in many cases the richest and most influential landlord in all the country round—which is everywhere and in all cases the State's most useful auxiliary or most dangerous enemy—the spiritual power that sits in judgment on it at the inner court of conscience, the place where all earnest public opinion is formed—the parental and educative power which leaves on the successive generations as they go forth from its hands that first decisive impress which is never wholly lost! One of the least believing men of our age lately wrote, in a great Review, that there is not a day but he feels himself controlled in his life by the faith which he has ceased to hold.* Blind indeed is the State that would suffer itself to ignore a power like this, living and working in its own bosom.

I said at Geneva, nearly four years ago: "The legitimate and desirable separation of Church and State consists in the suppression of appropriations for the support of the Church, in the election of the pastors by the people, in the government of the Church by the Church. Thus understood, the separation of Church and State is the final outcome of the French Revolution."† Very true, but this is something very different from a solution of the dreadful problem that is keeping us in suspense. In all this I find no guarantee for the security of the State. The Church, on the other hand, will sway a greater

* M. Ernest Renan, in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*.

† Discourse on *Ultramontanism and the Revolution*.

influence, simply because, in becoming freer and worthier, it will become stronger. I do not fear to say that were it separated from the State throughout Europe and the world, the Church of Rome, supposing it to be animated by the spirit of fanaticism and domination, will hold out no less stoutly in its struggle with modern society, and will never lack the resources for a good fight, if not a successful one.

But, for that matter, the experiment has been tried. Leave theories aside and come to facts. The experiment has been tried on both sides the ocean, and that it may be the more conclusive, it has been tried at the same time in a Catholic country and in a Protestant one: in Ireland and the United States. In Ireland you know with what dignity of feeling and political good sense O'Connell and his friends refused the subsidies offered to their Church by the English Government. Has the Church of Ireland been the poorer for this? And, above all, has it been less free, less national and less powerful? And as to the United States, Roman Catholicism exists there under general law, without privileges, without State appropriations, without any kind of connection with the State; and yet the Church within a few years has become a power which the great republic is forced to reckon with, and about which it sometimes even appears uneasy.

Several years ago, when the temporal power of the popes fell to pieces, there were generous minds that exclaimed: "This is the end of theocracy; in future, religious and political questions will be separated the world over." You see how it has turned out. They never have been worse confused. I am no more a partisan of the temporal power than I am an opponent of the separation of Church and State; but I remember a word spoken then by one of the most energetic defenders of the temporal power. He defended it especially as a means by which statesmen might force the ecclesiastical authorities to terms. And this is the expression used by that illustrious and unbelieving advocate of the kingship of the Pope: "Given a Capuchin Pope without temporal power, and that fanatic would be master of the world."

I think the assertion extravagant, but it is not without force. In your universal suffrage there are questions which you have never perceived, or at least have never pondered; that, for instance, of the peasants, that of a possible coalition between fanaticism and the democracy of the rural districts.

Fanaticism, I say, not religion. The latter I accept, I serve, I love. For it I would live, and if needful I would die. Ah, my friends, let no man mistake me. I may be inconsistent; they tell me so every day; but I am at least sincere, and when I say I am a Christian it is because I feel myself a Christian; and when I say I am a Catholic it is because I feel myself a

Catholic, without the particular errors, with it the practical abuses—Catholic in the grand tradition of the primitive Church, Catholic in the manly spirit of Gallican and liberal France.

The time may come, as I was saying, when there shall be brought about a coalition between a certain theocracy and a certain democracy—an effort, at least, to realize one of the wildest and unhealthiest of the dreams of ultramontaniam. Has not one of the leaders of this party lately written that the holy Roman Empire used to be too often rebellious and impotent withal, and that it is time now to prepare for the coming of “the Holy Roman Democracy”? * There will be concessions, not to liberty, but to equality—to socialism, if need be, for there are already advances made in that direction. Thus they will succeed in making up, if not a ruling majority, at least a formidable minority. If they cannot govern, they will hinder the rest from governing. True, this sword has two edges: opposed to the peasants of the country are the artisans of the towns, and, if need be, the “Roman democracy” might be combated by the democracy of the Revolution. In the rural districts, too, there is an element of good sense and patriotism which would have to be taken into account. But you see what all this leads to—war, the worst of all war—war civil and religious. Some men, I know, have no fear of it; I am told they even long for it. I would not insult the great majority of Roman Catholics by imputing this solution to them; it is the property of a little sect of fanatics and a little clique of intriguers. Least of all would I insult this assembly by discussing it in their presence.

I have only a few words to add as to the third solution—the subjection of the Church to the State. Within a few years we have witnessed a singular reaction in public opinion. It seems ready to-day to pronounce itself against that separation of Church and State which yesterday it was praying for; at least it mistrusts it, and postpones it indefinitely. Meanwhile, it demands that those bonds, which were said to be worn out, useless, or even hurtful, be strengthened. At times, even, they would confound the union of the two powers with the subjection of the Church to the State.

Whether you see in the Church an institution of God or a creation of the human conscience, it is in either case a holy thing, albeit in different degrees and spheres of holiness. In either case, it is the highest fact in the world of mind. Thus the true thinker, like the true believer, will regard the plan of political subjection of the Church with a feeling like that which inspired in Dante the expressive line:

“Non ragionam di lui, ma guarda e passa.”

It is one of those doctrines which are not to be discussed.

* M. Louis Veuillot, in the *Univers*.

It is to the honor of the Roman Church that it has never consented to give over its spiritual power to the State; although it has delivered men's consciences over to the secular arm when the State was willing to become its instrument. It has desired to subject to itself both State and conscience, but it never has accepted the subjection of the Church to the State. I add that no church having any sense of its own mission and dignity will ever freely accept such a bondage. How, in fact, could it be persuaded to do so? By the promise of honors? But in a time of universal discussion and public opinion what are honors if they are incompatible with honor? And what is money, what power is there in a salary, large or small, to bind to the oppressing State any priest in the least degree worthy of the name? Ah! if among the lowest of the Catholic clergy a shameless government could pick up a few priests, a few Judases (it is the right place for the name), to betray for thirty pieces of silver, not their God, for they never had one, but the souls of the weak and ignorant, it would only have created a clergy that could not serve it—a clergy with no more influence than faith, capable only of sharing with it the public revenue and the public contempt. To a church taking its orders not in its conscience, but in the ante-chamber or office of some political functionary, a useless slave, costly and damaging, the day would soon come when the politician would kick it from the door with the cry, "Courtesan, begone!"

If seduction is powerless, will force be less so? I long shared the generous illusion that force not only had no right, that I still admit, but also that it had no influence over the conscience. In this last regard, a closer study of human nature has brought me to different ideas. Doubtless force can have no power over heroic souls; but these are ever the exception; the other sort surrender sooner or later, more or less completely, before an energetic and persevering employment of force. Then come new generations trained in a different education, growing up in a different atmosphere, and the persecuted faith of the fathers becomes nothing but a historic recollection.

Do not cite against me the history of Christianity! I know that, far from perishing under the sword, it grew beneath it; I know that it conquered the Beast without shedding other blood than that of its own martyrs. But more even than the Hebrew monotheism, Christianity is a moral miracle; it was founded in contradiction to the laws of history, and in virtue of an inspiration from above. Let us take an example, more recent, alas! and more human, an example which touches us all, Catholics and Protestants, the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

I open, in imagination, the religious map of Europe, as it was made at that period and as it exists almost unchanged to

our day. What then, tell me, has traced these boundaries if not the sword, and in what are they marked if not in blood? Yes, history bears witness, wherever political power resolutely placed its sword, or rather its two swords, that of the law and that of the soldier, at the service of one of the two religious parties which were contending for men's souls, the souls have belonged to that party, to Catholicism or to Protestantism—that is to say to force.

Cujus regio, hujus et religio.

Only observe, that to attain this result force must not stop half way, but continue to the very end, to proscription, to the gallows and the stake, to massacre! What was possible in the sixteenth century is no longer possible in the nineteenth. In that respect, at least, we are greater than our fathers. The principle of liberty of conscience is still imperfectly applied, but it is universally recognized; no one dares attack it without some manifestation of respect for it; and if one undertakes a hypocritical campaign against it, he cannot hope to carry it through. Thus it would be a signal service to fanaticism to make it the object, I will not say of persecution, but of petty annoyance from the government. The victims, real or pretended, would only be made of more consequence. They would be made really greater by the stimulus given to their moral force; and then, whatever their faults and errors, they would be made greater in the estimation of all that respect a conscience that will not surrender.

Everything, then, is powerless, force as well as freedom, and the crisis of the world remains unsolved. Misunderstood, misapplied, the religious principle still holds the mastery, simply because it is religious. It rules, or at least divides your homes; it threatens your communities; it troubles your consciences; and nothing prevails against it, neither the science of skeptics, nor the withdrawal of liberals, nor oppression of governments. The spectre is ever there, raising in spite of you and against you the depths of your own nature, and holding in suspense and confusion all the forces of your civilization!

Since, then, you cannot master from without that religious power which God has made invincible, reform it from within. Attack it, not on its divine, but on its human side. Mischievous as, through our fault, it has often been, Catholicism will grow beneficent again if you can but restore it to its proper nature. Then, and then only, will you have solved the question of our age, and extorted from the sphinx the answer to that threatening riddle which it is putting to parties, to governments, to the country, a riddle hitherto inexplicable, and which will end in our being devoured.

Religious reform, and (to describe it more exactly) Christian and Catholic reform—this is the solution. But between us

and it rises a mountain—a mountain of abuses, errors, prejudices, of impossibilities, piled up as much by skepticism as by superstition, as much by worldly hypocrisy as by religious fanaticism; a mountain of many centuries' formation, though but lately crowned. Who will overthrow it? Is it not wiser, after all, to choose a road which flanks it on the right by the subtleties of diplomacy, on the left by open and absolute revolt? No, no! neither to the right nor to the left! We now know but too well whither those two roads lead; we know at least that they do not bring us out. Whom have we, then, that can remove mountains?

“If ye had faith but as a grain of mustard seed, ye should say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it should obey you.”

I believe the Master's word. I believe it literally. I believe that if it were needful to the soul, to Christian society, that the mountains should be transported by faith as they are transported by science, faith would work its miracles as science has. But leave the visible mountains where the hand of the Creator and the laws of nature have placed them. They stand there well in their calmness and majesty. It is the moral mountain which must be taken away, and, needful as it is, the miracle none the less transcends all human strength. But if we had a little of that faith which the Master requires, we should say to this mountain, “Be thou torn up from the earth, that Christian society and modern society, reconciled and liberated at last, may march forward to the future.” And the obstacle would depart from before us, and the mountain vanish in the deep. And thou Giant of souls,* Eternal, Infinite, in whose presence I have spoken, grant us, O God, grant us this power, most needful, most rare, most great: the power to believe in the impossible, to believe in it and to bring it to pass.

* “God is the Giant of Souls,” an expression of St. Theresa.

The Carnal Mind, and the Spiritual.

A SERMON

By **Charles F. Deems, D.D. L.L.D.,** PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE STRANGERS.

To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.—Rom. viii : 8.

THE Apostle makes a discrimination in the character and spiritual condition of men such as all of us must in some measure have noticed. We may not have been so distinct in our perceptions as he was, nor have given the same nomenclature, nor have been able to see the results as vividly, but the distinction cannot have escaped us. Not paying regard to where the light and shadow blended, making some uncertainty as to the character, the Apostle boldly classifies man as being *carnally minded or spiritually minded*, and he determines the character of each not by special acts of fitful badness or goodness, but by general principles and general life. The results in the one case are what all the world dreads, wretchedness and death, in the other what all the world wants, peace and life.

Let us endeavor to set this distinction plainly before our eyes. In general we see our fellow-men dividing themselves into two classes which we sometimes denominate very loosely as religious and irreligious. In both cases, especially the latter, we see instances of intensification—some religious men becoming so religious as to attract attention, and some irreligious men becoming so conspicuously wicked as to be actually shocking. In these instances our judgment and sentiment are not likely to be at fault, no nice discernment being required to form a correct opinion. It is where men are merely religious enough not to be noted as irreligious, or scarcely sufficiently irreligious to be separated from the people of the church, that we are liable to be confused in our judgment. Let us seek some aid in this investigation from the teaching of the Holy Apostle, and we shall probably find that his analysis is rigidly philosophical as well as morally sound.

At first the phrases appear in the one instance paradoxical, and in the other tautological. It seems like a paradox to say, "*carnally minded*," having a mind of flesh, and in the other a like unnecessary repetition, "*spiritually minded*," as *all* mind is of the nature of spirit. But, making a practical examination of human character, we shall probably find it difficult to discover epithets more strictly descriptive of characteristic differences than those used by the Apostle.

The composite structure of human nature is believed by all

but the rankest materialists, such modern Sadducees as believe that thought is only the finest product of the finest movement of the finest matter, as light is the product of the undulation produced by the pulsations of luminous particles. Of course we cannot carry these with us into our investigation. We address only those who believe not only that matter can exist without mind, but that equally mind may exist without matter. That is our belief. A man is a spirit clothed in a body. There being no spirit, there is no man; there being no body, there is no man. Can you conceive a man without some sort of a body? Is there in all the universe anything that thinks and feels that has no body, except the Supreme God? Try the experiment of conceiving such, if you would know the difficulty. Even if you should succeed, there remains this plain fact, that the men who have been born into the world and all that now are here have bodies, and must always be studied in relation to their bodies.

All our examination of the wonderful outward life produced by the more wonderful inner life, all study of the structure of the body and the constitution of the soul, must convince us that the soul is finer, higher, more elastic, more enduring than the body; that the body with all its rare apparatus is made for the soul and not the soul for the body; that neither produces the other; that the phenomena of human life are produced by the juncture of these two, and that this marriage of flesh and spirit is one of the grandest of all the sublime conceptions which make the poetry of the life of God. If this be so, or, putting it in the most prosaic way, if God made soul and body to be united, it is absolutely absurd to suppose that one necessarily injures the other—that matter is worse for spirit, or spirit worse for flesh. We ought not to have prejudices against the flesh. Flesh is good if spirit is better. It is a foolish old religious superstition that would lash and macerate the body and teach us that a man is a better man the less body he has, that there is something inherently evil in matter, and that if the creation of matter by Almighty God was not a blunder it was a remarkably perilous approximation thereto. I do not like to hear such irreverent intimations of the glorious and good Creator and Father of us all.

But, then, everything is good in its place and bad out of its place. It is not the existence but the displacement of what God has made that gives us all so much trouble. As these two are together, flesh and spirit, one must have been made to have the rule and be the head. That is God's plan. He does not make equals. The man is the head of the woman or the woman of the man; the parent is the child's superior or the child the parent's. The body was made for the soul or the soul for the body? Which? You will not hesitate to assign the superiori-

ty to the soul. It has all the attributes of rule. The real life is in it. It grows while the present outward body perishes, and will seize and hold *some* body, more or less perishable—this body of humiliation which we now see, or something the Apostle calls the spiritual body; but in any case the soul shall be charioteer and the body the chariot. In the preservation of the adjustment originally instituted by Almighty God lies the great art of grand and beautiful living.

Then I should say, my brethren, that a man is carnally minded whenever at any time he makes his intellectual and spiritual faculties the slaves of his flesh instead of keeping these the best friends of his body.

1. We instinctively think, first of all, of the abandonedly profligate, drunkards and licentious people whose lives have gone into utter grossness of all filthiest indulgences. And we may as well contemplate this for a season, as it is the form which all the finer shapes of the carnal mind are perpetually seeking to put on, their tendency being strongly that way.

It is amazing to what depths a man may descend who yields his soul up to his body. We speak of "beastiality" when we desire to designate some utter lowness of character or life; but we do injustice to our fellow creatures among the brutes. No process has yet been discovered by which any brute can be degraded to the depth into which a human being falls when he becomes thoroughly carnal minded, having abandoned all the restraints which the soul can impose. The brute has not the capabilities. Examine the case of the drunkard. His is simply the case of a man who, having intoxicated himself, has an uncontrollable desire to poison himself again, and to keep himself poisoned, for intoxication simply means poisoning. A poisoned man cannot exert his intellectual faculties nor control his physical powers so as to be useful or agreeable to himself or to any one else. He breaks all his pledges to society. He lays the strain of an intolerable load on all the chords of human affection, so that he is a burden to his parents, his wife, his children and his friends. He receives no physical, intellectual or moral pleasure or profit from drinking. He neither enriches himself with money nor crowns himself with honor. He knows the whole wrong of it and the whole ruin of it. He acknowledges them. Yet he goes forward. The case is that of one whose mind is so in the grip of his flesh that the mind does the bidding of the lusts against all its own interests and desires. The man does not want to be a drunkard. But what is he to do? He tells you that if a glass of spirits sat there, and a cannon were planted yonder, and any plank in all the floor might touch a spring which would discharge the contents of the great gun across his path, he would nevertheless take the risk and run across the floor for the spirits. He knows the

whole unmanliness of it: yet he does it. His flesh has taken the mastery of his soul. Did you ever know a brute that was so degraded? Did ever Arabian horse, or Nubian lion, or Bengal tiger, or Durham bull, or Newfoundland dog, or Maltese cat, or any individual of the lower breeds of these animals ever degrade itself to this extent? Fitfully the beast of the jungles may flame with such tropic heat and madden into such uncontrollable rage as to do violence to its higher instincts of self-preservation, but it does not so habitually as the man does who walks after the flesh. When you once commence the descent, remember that you must be above or below the brute. You cannot reach his platform and remain with him. You cannot among all the beasts find a mate for a confirmed drunkard suffering with *delirium tremens*.

2. But the carnally minded are not merely those whose licentiousness have made them hideous spectacles, rotting in lazar-houses, or raging in bagnios, or rolling in the mud in helpless drunkenness. Nor are these really the most dangerous forms. They are so terrible that they frighten. What we must specially guard ourselves against is a species of refined sensualism which seems so compatible with good and unsuspected positions in society, with high aim and cultivated taste, but which attacks the soul like a species of dry rot.

It is possible to maintain one's position in the church, and yet—such are the concessions which the church makes to the world—to do many things which, in ourselves and others, tend to give the mastery to the flesh over the spirit. At the risk of being voted impolite, I mean, this morning, to be quite candid with you. I mean to bear my testimony against the vicious arrangements of society in our midst. To my own people I can say these things freely, because they must know now how I love their souls, and not one of them can suspect me of Puritanism. Believing in being and making happy, discouraging all gloomy views of life and of religion, encouraging all innocent and healthful recreations, I can frankly make my utterance against what seems wrong in this direction. I lift my voice against all late entertainments, parties that assemble near midnight and continue to near daybreak, interspersed with the eating of such solids and the drinking of such liquors as heat the blood, and with such dances of both sexes as inflame the lusts of all the dancers. These are plain words that every man and woman who has ever been so engaged knows their truth. Deacons, elders, office-bearers in the church may have such entertainments, but that does not reverse the laws of nature. Flesh and blood are flesh and blood in bishop's houses as in brothels, in drawing-rooms as in sculleries. You cannot excuse yourselves by saying that your place of residence and your connections being in fashionable circles you must con-

form. Govern them, do not let them govern you. Yielding to them you are not only carnally-minded, but are training your children and the children of your neighbors for such courses as must sink their souls in the mire of carnality.

Under this condemnation fall such theatrical and spectacular exhibitions as unduly excite the spectators. I did not join the hue and cry against the "Black Crook," by name, when it was in full headway in this city, merely because it seemed to me the proprietors could have found no better advertisement than the pulpit gave them, and I for one would not help. But now I solemnly warn against all such corrupting exhibitions. They find their support in the multitudes of church people who are fleshly minded. Every man of you that went the second time knows that he went because of the excitement produced by seeing pretty women shamelessly nude. And he came away with his soul a greater vassal to his body. We turn with horror and disgust from the lowest forms of female degradation which are reported to us by the Moral Reform societies, and do not reflect that thousands of church members, by their late suppers, unwholesome dances and patronage of the ballet, are contributing annually thousands of dollars to make the beginnings of those results which appear so fearful in the purlieu of the Five Points.

3. Then there may be what is much removed from all these grosser things—a fine and cultivated and tasteful devotion to the flesh, which absorbs all the time, commands all the faculties and exhausts all the life. It may be in man as well as in woman. It never exists among the lowly. It has the basis of wealth and leisure. It has also the plea of caring for the health, "which is a duty, you know." A man of means has no business, no need of conducting a business. He studies his comfort, his dress, his diet, his sleeping, his baths, all his appointments. He will not be detained by any sermon in a church or by any play in a theatre that is not exactly warmed and precisely ventilated. He studies the thermometer and barometer. In short, his whole life is occupied in settling questions of his personal conduct. He has no business. He never exerts himself. He does no good, belongs to no aggressive party or organization. A few such men I have met in American society, not many; but they will multiply with the growth of wealth. Already there are more such cases among the women, who add the delicacy of their sex to all other considerations. It would shock the nerves of such a lady dreadfully if some John Knox should go to her and blurt out, "Madam, you are carnally-minded." "I? why, there's nothing gross about me. I never eat too heartily, but still enough and healthfully; I never remain late at entertainments, I do not allow myself to become heated, and I never waltz. I bathe con-

scientifically, and am daintily neat. Everything gross offends me. How can you say that I am carnally-minded? I keep my fancy filled with the purest poetic images. In every sense your rude charge is unfounded." Pardon me, madam, perhaps John Knox has some ground. Allow me to ask you, When you have done all this for your body, and have brought it to the sweetest and most wholesome condition, do you then employ it as an improved instrument for the use of your soul? Do you more easily, more skilfully, more firmly bring an equally cultivated soul to bear upon the world? Is this rare physical *cultus* a means or an end? If an end, then perhaps more accurately and more philosophically may the term *carnally-minded* be applied to you than the most degraded of your sex. She, poor thing, has scarcely any mind at all. But you have a fine intellect, variously developed by study and society and travel; and you devote your whole spiritual powers to the sole and solitary work of caring for your body. If your body should suddenly evaporate your poor soul would stand in utter confusion, having nothing in the universe to care for, having never cared for itself. It is really time for close self-searching. So insidious a leaven is the carnal mind that it may invade our sanctuaries without our knowledge, and blight our souls with no more warning than the pestilence gives.

4. I must sound the alarm in the ears of another class who are not self-indulgent, not dainty, not drunkards, not licentious. They are hard-working, aggressive, always ready to *do*. They have barely time to wash their faces and hands once or twice a day, and perhaps take a bath on Saturday night or Sunday morning. They never waste time or money upon theatres, and would as soon think of walking the slack rope of a circus as of engaging in a social dance. They are all energy and all business. They despise a dandy more than they do a poodle puppy. They are never drunken nor debauched. Up early, down late, always paying their debts promptly, always liberal in a good cause, they have not had time to inquire whether they were carnally-minded or not. When they have heard the phrase in church or met it in the Bible, they have hurriedly supposed that it meant drunkards and men of that kind, and never dreamed that they might be included.

It is not pleasant, my friends, to disturb your quiet on this subject, seeing that your busy lives give you other manifold disturbances: but I must. Take a few minutes in church this morning to examine your own hearts. Let me help you. *For what* are you managing this great business? What is the *end* of the great exertions of intellect you make? What will you do with the money you are now so rapidly accumulating? Give yourselves a quite honest answer to those questions, and perhaps you will then see your lives in a new light. If it be to

develop your intellect for greater efforts in behalf of your race, or to discipline your own soul for a state of existence higher and grander than that upon earth, then you are safe, so far as that is concerned. But is that so? Is not the dominant reason of all your exertion that you may have larger means to indulge "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life"—in yourself, or in your wife and children? If so, then do you not see that you are carnally-minded? Will you put all your great powers to the doing of that which is to *end* in the flesh? That seems to me to be the final test.

In all these cases the Apostle declares the end to be death. And so it must be. When all the streams of life are turned away from the spiritual part of man to irrigate and enrich the body, the soul must perish—in this sense, that the man ceases to have interest in spiritual things, ceases to feel the importance of cultivating, strengthening, purifying his soul. The really best part of a man is in the soul. If a man cease to use his left arm, his left foot, his left eye, they will wither and become helpless, and to all intents dead. And then, it is such a perversion of nature that it must breed disorders which are deadly. It is subverting God's ordained order in the universe by making that to be master which he designed to be servant. In any engine of human contrivance destruction must follow such a mad undertaking.

It is ruinous to character. When a beast employs all his instincts and capabilities to nurture his body, he acts in exact accord with the intent of his creation. The best of him is his flesh. His highest pleasures are to be found in his flesh. The good the world gets out of him is what the flesh affords. His highest culture must be made upon the basis of his flesh. But exactly the reverse of this is true of a man. *His* highest pleasures must be found in his soul, *his* highest culture is the development of his soul, and all the very best gifts he makes to his race are those which his soul can bestow. To be carnally-minded is to smother the purest fire of his life in the horrid mire of fleshness, and spoil the whole human character which was given him to develop and improve.

It is the death of peace. The consciousness of the offence against God, against society, against one's self, this friction and commotion caused by an interruption of the normal processes of the universe, this collision against the laws of life, must break a man's peace thoroughly.

And then the *whole man* is sunk into the flesh, which perishes. The mortal is not sublimed by the immortal, but the immortal is dragged down by the mortal. The flesh must perish. If then the man has embarked all in that, if the whole life has been invested in the flesh, if the power and gifts and properties of the man have been emptied into the body, when *that* perishes

the man dies, dies the unutterable death. Think of it, you that every day and every night spend all your hours and all your powers in making provision for the flesh, how you are dropping rarest and most costly gems down a gorge, down a shaft, down a chasm, from which no divers can ever bring them; that all that is done for the body beyond what is necessary to render it a fit instrument for the soul is just that much utterly perished, gone irretrievably. And if *all you have*, if intellect and soul and time be given to the body, then you throw away your whole estate. And thus, in a terrible sense, to be carnally-minded is death.

The other class the Apostle describes are those who are *spiritually-minded*. Let us see what this means. The apostle cannot be supposed to mean anything which implies the neglect of the body, of which he teaches that great care should be taken because it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. He does not mean a state of mystic rapture in seclusion from the world. He was too earnest and energetic a man to inculcate anything like that. A man of affairs from his youth and always crowded with business, he could have looked with little favor upon anything like monastic life. Modern pietists who think that they can promote their spirituality by neglect of their persons, believing that holiness is a plant that thrives in dirt, making loud and long exercises in public meetings, leaving their children at home unkempt, unwashed and uncared for, their expenditures overrunning their incomes, their creditors dunning them, while they are off to "meeting" enjoying themselves hugely, being as they call it "above the world"—such people are a mere caricature upon the idea which the Apostle had of being spiritually-minded.

Let us see if we can make a reasonable sense of these words.

If to be carnally-minded means to give the thoughts up to the flesh and run the whole life in that channel, to be *spiritually-minded must signify to give the thoughts and efforts of the life up to the culture of the spirit*, to mind one's spirit, to watch its wants, to nurse it, to have the special cure of one's spirit, and use the intellect and the flesh for it.

A man who does this will value his soul at an incalculable price. He will not sell it for any conceivable thing. His crown, his glory, his chief possible distinction in all the universe he will believe to reside in the fact that he has a soul. He will make measure of himself not by his physical or intellectual size or power, but by the purity, sweetness, strength and loftiness of his soul. His pecuniary circumstances, his bodily health, his social position, will all seem quite small matters in his eyes compared with the state of his soul before God.

Such a man will not be neglectful of his body, his intellect or his business, but he *will* care for all these as the precious

and useful servants of his soul. In that it seems to me the great distinction lies. To be a little more specific:

1. He will *not pamper his body*, but will keep it groomed into excellent working order. He will neither throw away nor regard it as the instrument of the highest class of pleasures he can enjoy. He will neither scorn nor worship it. To be spiritually-minded does not imply that a man will take no pleasure in his body, that he will despise the pleasures which the appetites in their reasonable indulgence were intended by the Almighty Father to bring to His children. The case is this: The body is the most useful vehicle for the soul that can be conceived: God in infinite wisdom saw best to make it with a tendency to decay, and so constituted it that it should be kept in repair and working order by certain processes which are known to us as eating, drinking, digestion and the like; and that men might not neglect to discharge these duties to the body, He has made them a pleasure and a delight. Now, as a carnally-minded person is one who is *content with the processes* and has ceased to have interest in the result, a spiritually-minded person is one who *enjoys the processes but is not content therewith*, but eats, drinks, sleeps, bathes, dresses and uses every appetite as a help to his soul. In the world beyond the grave he will have pleasant memory of his body, *as of a beautiful ship that has carried him over a stormy sea*, a ship which he used on the voyage, but which he did not allow to cleave to him as a part of himself. And be ye well assured, dear brethren, that to have the best and sweetest uses of the body, a man must be spiritually-minded in Paul's sense, not in the sense of canting religionists. You can get nothing good out of the soul when you make it the slave of the body, and nothing good out of the body except as you make it the servant of the soul.

2. The spiritually-minded man will apply the same process of thought to his mind. He will not despise the intellect nor the results of intellectual effort, whether in himself or in his fellow-men. But he will not feel that all the world was made for the mind, that a man is to be measured by his mind, and that the mind does its whole will solely for itself. Into these errors do they run who do not "mind the Spirit." But the spiritually-minded man will more conscientiously than others devote himself to the culture of his intellect, because thereby he may aid the growth of the power of his soul. If he does not live to eat, but eats to live, so he does not live to think, but thinks to live. He uses the mind as a higher servant than the body, but still as servant. There is just where the difference exists between the two classes of people of culture: the one is engaged in intellectual pursuits for the mere pleasure or praise which such pursuits yield; the other is engaged in intellectual pursuits with direct reference to fitting them to be better ser-

vants of God in this world or in any other to which the Divine Power may introduce them. Taste, judgment, reason are precious to them as instruments by which they may extract from this world what will feed their souls to greatness.

3. As to the ordinary affairs and employments of this life the spiritually-minded man will be "not slothful in business" while he is fervent in spirit. It is an injurious mistake to believe that business is detrimental to the soul's health. Men sometimes make a plea for neglecting business that it interferes with what they call their "spirituality." In every case where I have had time to examine this matter I have found it to grow out of the *laziness* of the complainant or his *incompetency*. I do believe that Wall Street and Pearl Street, the money market and the cotton market, are just as good for spiritual-mindedness as the Union Theological Seminary or the monastery at Fordham places of quietness and study. In these soft retreats the carnally-minded *will* walk after the flesh, and in those busy marts the spiritually-minded *will* walk after the spirit. But while they plunge into business and are just as energetic and pushing as others, the results they aim at are not the same. They do their work as they make their prayers, for their soul's sake. They are not sustained and animated by pictures of fleshly or wordly enjoyment which they shall have from the money they make—they regard their own soul's growth in the processes and the good they may do other souls in the results.

And now, dear brethren, if I have rightly apprehended and clearly set forth the Apostle's distinction, you must see that there is a profound truth in his saying that "to be spiritually-minded is life and peace." It must be peace, because the whole man is in harmony with the highest laws of the universe, has no collision with law, or life, or God, and is pursuing that course of culture which he knows must issue in the advancement of his supreme interest, *whatever may be the state or termination of his outward earthly affairs*. It must be life, for it gains both worlds. It reaps the longest, largest, sweetest uses of the flesh, the loftiest and the most lasting results of the mind, and whatever is best and most desirable in the business projects and achievements of this world. To be carnally-minded is condemnation and death. There must always be a painful sense of humiliation to the spirit—so fine, ethereal, immortal a thing—to be degraded into slavish subjection to the flesh, a kingly personage doing menial service for his lowest slave. There cannot be comfort and peace there. And it must be death. The carnally-minded person loses both lives, the outward and the inward, the life that now is and that which is coming. He loses his soul's life by crushing it under his flesh. He loses the best life of the flesh by not employ-

ing it in the service of his soul. And all the while the poor man is befooling himself with the belief that he is "seeing life," "enjoying the good things of life."

Let me ask you, dear brethren, not to forget that the Apostle speaks of these two characteristics *not as indicating a fit or paroxysm of goodness or badness*, but as the style of the life and the method of the man's progress, as *walking* after the flesh or *walking* after the spirit. A spiritually-minded man may have his lapses, his obscurations, his troubled times when the flesh is too much for him, but his *tendency* is to rule his body under his soul; his direction is toward the port, however dragged now and then from his courses by violent squalls or storms, or miscalculations; while the carnally-minded man may have now and then in church, or in affliction, a temporary desire to purify himself even as God is pure, but his walk, his tendency is downward, is to bring all the powers of the soul into a final subserviency to the body: he is a helmless and steamless ship, drifting, making no special headway, now and then flung on some miles in the direction of the port, and then a hundred miles away, until his rocked timbers loosen and dispart, and he sinks away into brokenness and utter wreck.

Finally, dear brethren, remember that the "law of the spirit of life is in Christ Jesus," that you cannot recover yourselves from the power and dominion of the carnal mind except as you are in Christ Jesus, that to be spiritually-minded is to have "the mind that was in Christ." As a man comes to love Jesus with a holy passion he ceases to care inordinately for the things that perish, and more and more his soul, for which Christ died, comes in the light of that cross to be inestimably precious, life to be grand as it prepares for the spiritual life which has no decay, and all efforts and burdens endurable as they make one more and more ready to enter upon the duties and enjoyments of the highest form of spiritual activity. "There is therefore now no condemnation," and there never can be any condemnation, "to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Vanities and Verities.

A SERMON

DELIVERED BY C. H. Spurgeon, AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, LONDON, ENGLAND.

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen : for the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.
—2 Corinthians iv : 18.

THE apostle Paul was by no means a stoic. He had not conquered all human feeling, and rendered himself a stone man. On the contrary, he was exceedingly sensitive. You can see abundant evidence, not only in the Acts of the Apostles, but also in the tone of all his epistles, that he has a very tender spirit. He feels acutely any unkindness. If a friend forsakes him, he mourns it; or if friends oblige him, there is genuine emotion in his gratitude. He is sensitive, too, to poverty, sensitive to shame; sensitive to all those griefs which he has to bear for Christ's sake. He feels them; you can see that he does. He is not an invulnerable man in armor, he is a man of flesh and blood, whom the arrow pierces and pains. Yet how bravely he sticks to his work; he faces every danger and never dreams of flinching. Never for a single moment does he seem to take into consideration what he may have personally to suffer for the testimony of Christ and the triumph of the gospel. He remembers the pangs when they are past; he looks on the scars when they are healed, and he sometimes gives a long list of the perils and privations he has had to endure, thus showing that he was keenly sensitive; but he never tries to shelter himself from any sort of suffering if it is necessary to accomplish his life-work. Thus he pressed steadily on through evil report and good report, through honor and through dishonor, enjoying the love of the churches at one time, and at another time smarting under a cruel suspicion of his apostleship even among his own converts; now the hero of unbounded popularity when the people crowd to do him honor, and anon the victim of public hatred and frenzied riot when he is dragged out of the city to be stoned to death. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me," he could well say. He seemed as if God had thrown him forth from His hand, even as He hurls a thunderbolt, and he stayed not until he reached the end towards which the power of God was urging him. He cried, "The love of Christ constraineth us." He reckoned himself, therefore, dead to all but Christ. Well may we be curious to know what supported so noble a man under his trials, and developed such a hero under such a succession

of oppositions. What kept him so calm? what made him so self-possessed and intrepid?

How was it that when cast down he was not destroyed—that when troubled he was not distressed? What sustained him? He gives us the key to this fortitude by telling us that he counted his afflictions light because they were, in his estimation, but for a moment; and they were working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. He was calm and happy midst rage and tumult, violent prejudice and adverse, and even disastrous, circumstances, because, in the language of the text, he looked not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen, reckoning that the things which are seen are not worth looking at, so transient are they, while the things unseen are of priceless worth, because they are eternal. This is our subject at this time: Firstly, *things not to be looked at*; and, secondly, *things to be looked at*.

The text wears the shape of a double paradox. Things that can be seen are, naturally, the things to be looked at. What should a man look at but what he can see? And yet the apostle tells us not to look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. How can things invisible be looked at? That again is a paradox. How can you look at what you cannot see? This is only one paradox of the Christian life, which is all paradox, and the riddle lies rather in the words than in the sense. We shall soon discover that there is no contradiction or incongruity, no difficulty whatever.

I. First, then, let us LOOK AT WHAT CAN BE SEEN, and ask, what are we to understand by this protest: "We look not at the things which are seen"? The word for "*look*" is used, I think, six times in the New Testament, and is translated in four or five different ways. I do not intend to keep to those translations, but to work them into the explanation of what is meant by not looking at the things which are seen.

It means, first, *lightly esteeming both present joy and present sorrow*, as if they were not worth *looking at*. The present is so soon to be over that Paul does not care to look at it. There is so little of it, and it lasts such a brief time, that he does not even deign to give it a glance, he looks not at it. Here he is persecuted, despised, forsaken. "It will not last long," saith he. "It is but a pin's prick; it will soon be over, and I shall be with the goodly fellowship above, and behold my Master's face." He will not look at it. He ignores it. Thus it behooves us to do if surrounded with trials, troubles, present sorrows; we should not think so much of them as to fix our attention, or rivet our gaze on them. Rather let us treat them with indifference, and say, "It is really a very small matter whether I am in wealth or in poverty, in health or in sickness; whether I am enjoying comforts or whether I am robbed of

them. The present will be so soon gone that I do not care to look at it. I am like a man who stays at an hostelry for a night while he is on a journey." Is the room uncomfortable? When the morning breaks it is of no use making a complaint, and so he merely chronicles the fact, and hastens on. He says to himself, "Never mind, I am up and away directly; it is of no use fretting about trifles." If a person is going a long distance in a railway carriage, he may be a little particular as to where he shall sit to see the country, and as to which way he likes to ride; but if it is only a short stage—between, say, the Borough Road and the Elephant and Castle—he does not think about it. He does not care in whose company he may be, it is only for a few minutes; he is hardly in before he is out again, it is a matter not worth thinking about. That is how the apostle regarded it. He reckoned that his present joys and present sorrows were so soon to be over that they were to him a matter of indifference, not even worth casting his eye that way to see what they were. "Doth Jesus bid me go to Rome?" says the apostle. "Then I do not look to see whether I shall be housed in Nero's hall or caged in Nero's dungeon. It is for so short a while that if I can serve my Master better in the dungeon than I can in the palace, so let it be. My casual lot shall be my well-contented choice. It shall be a matter, if not of cool indifference, yet still of calm serenity, for it will be soon over, and gone into history. A whole eternity lies beyond, and therefore a short temporality dwindles into an insignificant trifle." What a blessed philosophy this is which teaches us not even to look at passing, transient troubles, but to fix our gaze on eternal triumphs.

He meant more than that, however. He meant that he had learned not to regard the things of the present as if they were at all real. He did not look upon them as substantial or enduring. Like as clouds when they float overhead assume divers shapes but change their form while we are gazing at them, so events as they seemed to be transpiring were to him no more than apparitions. When a man looks on a dissolving view, knowing that it is going to dissolve, he does not regard it as being other than an illusion. It is a shadow cast upon a sheet; there is nothing substantial in it. It may please his eye, but he will say, "The subject upon the sheet is not the real thing. The view before me is not the scene itself, and if I turn my eyes away from it, it will have melted away into nothingness in a little while; so for all its charms or its terrors I will not fret myself." You know how Paul explains his own words in another passage when he says, "Brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they

that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." That is so with the earthly joy of the best of men. He should say to himself: "This is a dying joy; these will pass away; I look at it as a shadow." Is a child born into your house? Read across its brow the word "Mortal," and when it dies you will not be disappointed or be anything like so sad as if you dreamed that you were the parent of an immortal; such a thought *must* be a dream, since *your* little one may be taken from you as well as the child of another. When you have riches do you say to yourself, "This is a solid treasure; this is golden gain"? Ah, then it will be your god, and if you lose it the loss will eat like a canker into your spirit. But if you say, "These are fleeting things; they take to themselves wings and fly away; I will not consider money to be treasure, but only look upon it as a shadow and hold it as such—as a thing not to be reckoned with substances, because it is seen and temporal"—that is the way to do with every one of our joys. Do not look upon them as though they were substantial, for they are not. They are a part of this life-dream, this empty show; they are nothing more at their very best. Oh, how often do they prove to us, painfully, that they are unsubstantial! Look in the same way upon your circumstances. Say, "Well, I am in poverty, but this is not real poverty, because it is not lasting poverty. In a short time I shall be among the angels and walk the streets of gold, and be as bravely clad as any prince among them; therefore will I not fret and worry, since my poverty will soon be over." Aught of loss or suffering that you are called upon to endure, always look upon it in the light of time, and see what a fleeting thing it is, and bear it bravely like a man—nay, like a Christian man—because you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. These transient things are not worthy to be considered. Look upon them as if they were just nothing at all. So the apostle did.

Again, I find the word sometimes translated "*mark*." "Brethren," saith the apostle, "mark them that are unruly." The word is the same as that which is here rendered "look." Dear friends, we are not to mark the things which are seen as if they were worth notice. You know that little children, when you give them a new toy or a new frock, clap their hands and otherwise express their delight. That is because they are children. Be not children in knowledge, but quit yourselves as men; and as to the things of this life, look on them as toys. Do not act toward them as children do, but as men. "Oh," says the young man, "I have taken my degree at the university today." How he exults! What high importance he attaches to it. He wishes to get the newspaper to see if it is recorded there.

It is to him an event as great as anything in history. We per-adventure are rather amused at his excitement, for we do not consider anything of this sort worthy of marking down. Another man finds that he has made some considerable gain, and he, too, reckons as a red letter day the day in which he seized these accessions to his fortune. If thou art doing so thou art making sorrow for thyself, for as surely as joy becomes too sweet, sorrow will become too bitter. If I care nothing whatever for man's approbation, I reckon little of man's disapprobation; one getteth to be brave in that way. It is not good to be much elated or depressed by the joys and sorrows of life. If you are overjoyed, if you mark down certain matters as the very essence of happiness, and begin to exult and revel in the things which are seen, then, mark you, when the untoward things come to you and blight your hopes, you will find that you have rendered yourself too sensitive, and you will feel the smart far more keenly than you would have done if you had exercised wisdom enough to forbear reveling in the sweets. Look at the wasps and flies in the summer. They will see placed for them by your kindness sweet liquor in which to catch them; sugar or honey is employed to hold their wings. The wise fly sips a little and away, but the unwise insect enjoys the sweet and wades in farther and farther till he clogs his wings, and he it is who will suffer when you come to destroy your prey. It is a blessed thing to be able to sip of this world, and no more, for to plunge into it is death. Avoid the sweets of this world when they begin to tempt thee. Say of them, as Solomon did of wine: "Look not upon it when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright, for who hath woe, who hath sorrow, who hath contention, who hath babbling, who hath wounds without cause, who hath redness of eyes?" Surely the men who make this world to be their highest joy find at the last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth as an adder. They indulge their passions to the destruction of their souls. Do not, therefore, mark carnal joy as specially to be desired.

But are we never to have anything special to mark? Oh, yes; carefully mark down the eternal things. Did the Lord appear to you? Mark that down. Did you win a soul to Christ? Mark that down. Did you have sweet answers to prayer? Mark that down. Those are things of special note, as I am quite sure Paul thought. Though he would not say much about the discomforts of the dungeon of the Prætorium, he marked down its consolations. When Onesimus came to hear him, he made a note of it. It did not matter to him whether he was assailed with stones or surrounded with applause. Whether he lodged in a palace or slept in a prison was to him no more than the incident, or say but the accident, of the hour; he made no account of such trivialities. He never

marked those things down: the eternal was what he marked, but not the transient.

Another meaning is, *take heed*. You must put all the translations together to get the meaning. In the gospel according to Luke this word is translated, "Take heed." The apostle meant, no doubt, that he did not take heed of the things which were seen. He did not exercise care, thought and anxiety about them; but his care, thought and anxiety were about the things which are not seen. "After all these things," says Christ, "do the Gentiles seek." So they do. They are always seeking after the world; from early morning till late at night it is the world they are after. Well, let the Gentiles follow their pursuits; but the child of God should not, for our Lord says unto us, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed." He bids us cast our care upon Him, and cease from all anxiety. "Seek ye," says he, "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." So the apostle Paul tells us not to care, not to worry or trouble ourselves about things which are seen, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse—never suffering them to eat like a corrosive acid into our spirit. We are to spend all our heed upon our walk with God, our obedience to His command, our fulfilling His will, our spreading His kingdom, our getting ready for the coming of Christ, our being prepared for judgment, our being prepared to dwell eternally with God at His right hand. About these we ought to take heed. This is our business, but, alas! our thoughts naturally drift the other way. These temporalities are wont to absorb us. There are some who not only apologize for themselves, but justify their worldly-mindedness. Fitly, therefore, doth the Lord Jesus Christ, by the mouth of His apostle, recall our thoughts from grovelling themes, and bid us take heed of the eternal, and let the secular sit lightly on our minds.

Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians uses the word in the sense of *considering*, "considering thyself lest thou also be tempted." We shall dive still more deeply into the meaning if we understand how in certain conditions, the present, the transient, the things most palpable to the senses are properly left out of all consideration and not taken into the reckoning. For instance, if the apostle knew that he should glorify God by preaching the gospel, what would it matter to him if friend or foe should say to him, "Paul, you will risk your life by attempting to do so"? Live or die, he would be bold to preach. He never took their caveat into his consideration. And if they had said, "If you state such and such a truth, or administer such and such a reproof in a certain church, you will be sure to lose their respect; you will lose caste among them," again he would

have smiled. It would have had no more influence upon him than it would have upon a merchant should you say to him, "If you go into such a district you will have to encounter clouds of dust." He would reply, "Why, if I can net a thousand pounds, what do I care about dust or no dust?" If it be my object to ascend a mountain, am I to be deterred by a few cobwebs across my path? What are tiny obstacles to a strong man? So Paul did not consider the things which are seen to be worth a thought, though there be puny folk who value nothing else. The cost to him seemed so little that he would let it go into the scale or not, as men pleased. "I reckon that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

Are you not sometimes placed in this position? You know you ought to do right, but you fear that if you do so you will lose your situation. Well, now, if God's cause be uppermost in your estimation, you will not consider your loss as the first matter. You will rather say, "I can lose anything sooner than lose peace of mind and miss pleasing God." Or there is some duty which you know you ought to perform, and you are told, "Well, if you do that you will lose your old uncle's love. He will strike you out of his will. You must think about it." What is the use of thinking about it? It is only an earthly, transient thing; and what are these transient things, be they what they may, compared with the eternal weight of glory? O brothers, if men lived in the light of eternity, and judged their position accordingly, how differently would they act! But instead of so doing we begin weighing those trifles which we may have to endure for Christ's sake, and making much of them. This is playing the traitor to Christ, and forsaking Him when we ought to be most firm. Shame upon us if we thus requite our Lord. Eternal contempt awaits such cowards. From this time forth may we never look upon the things which are seen as substantial, but put them down as vanity, and let the things which are not seen rise before us in all their supremacy of value.

Perhaps you may get a still clearer perception of the meaning of the text if I tell you its full interpretation. By "not looking at the things which are seen" we may understand *not making them our scope*. That is the nearest English word I can find to interpret the Greek. Let not these visible objects be the scope of your life; for, alas! there are many whose whole scope of life is that they may prosper in this world. The next world may go as it will; their scope ends here. To win the esteem of God seems a trifle to them. That they may live at ease, enjoy the comforts and, if possible, the luxuries of this life, is their sole aim and object. As for the eternal things of

heaven, they seem dim and unsubstantial. Now, it must not be so with us. We should say, "The things eternal I pursue. I am no more a citizen of this world, but a pilgrim bound for the celestial city. When I passed through Vanity Fair, they asked me to buy this and that, and I said, 'I buy the truth.' I must go through the Enchanted Ground, but I will not sleep there, for this is not my rest. Whatever I see which is enchanting to others shall have no power over me, for the scope of my soul's desire and life-work is eternity." Would to God we all had invisible joys for our object!

To sum up the whole, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, look not at the things which are seen. Do not look upon your comforts as if they were enduring. Do not dote upon them. Do not think of them as if you had them otherwise than on loan, or as if you had any right to them. Be thankful to God for them; but, because they will so soon pass away, do not set much store by them. Build not your nest on any of these trees, for they are all marked for the axe, and ere long they will all come down. Say not of any mortal man, or woman, or dear child, or worldly possession, or knowledge, or pursuit, or honor—"This is much to me." Let it be little to you. Put the gifts of God far down in the scale compared with Himself. Try, when you have your comforts, to find God in all; and, when you lose your comforts, then just change the words, and try to find all in God; for, remember, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God shall man live."

You have not to live on the creature comfort; you are bound to live on the living word of the living God, and you will never be fully happy until you do this. A man who goes to a town and chooses a house that is dilapidated, the foundations gone and the beams decayed, may say, "This is a very comfortable house." But *you* would not think so highly of its charms. "Nay," you would be ready to say, "I cannot be comfortable in it. The rich hangings and costly furniture do not hide the serious defects; it may come down at any time about the heads of the sleepers. This is not a house for me." You know this is the case in daily life and common experience. Well, it is just similar with regard to the things eternal. Say, therefore, to yourself, "I must repose my soul upon that which is true, real, well founded, and imperishable; earthly things are too transient to afford me any solace or security. I dare not set my soul upon them. I cannot drink water out of these broken cisterns; I must go to the fountain whence all-satisfying, trust-worthy supplies flow."

You must do the same with regard to your sorrows: although it looks rather hard, yet it is the wiser way to take them cheerfully, rather than to exaggerate their weight by murmuring at them. If a man has grace to live above his joys, that same

grace will enable him to live above his sorrows. As I said just now, when earthly joys enchant you too much, then should earthly sorrows overtake you they will make you sorely despond. Your wisdom is to live above them both, above the glee of prosperity and the gloom of adversity. Dear brother, what ails you? Have you lost a child? Lost! Why, you will be where that dear one is within so incredibly short a time that you need not worry and fret. Coming down from such a domestic grief as that to a commercial anxiety: you have had a sad loss in the city, have you? Some of your comforts will be curtailed. But if you get nearer to the heart of your Lord, and love Him better, and walk in the light of His countenance more than you did, you will never know you had a loss. You will be so much richer in the fine gold of His comfort that you will scarcely miss the silver of this poor world.

And so, too, if you lose credit or are discountenanced by old friends, or are deprived of aught which men are wont to make great account of here below; if you do but remember that it was only a bubble, and it has burst, you will not be broken-hearted. Say, "It never was more than a bubble, and I ought to have known that it would soon be gone. The comfort I had was never anything but a temporary loan, and I ought to have remembered that it was borrowed." If you get into that mind you will live above the cares of this life. May God help you so to do!

II. Now, for a few minutes let us address ourselves to the second point—LOOKING AT THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN. How can we do that?

Well, first, *realize them by faith*. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the judgment, and in life everlasting, according to the teaching of the Word of God. Try to look at these things—to look at them as present facts. Some will never do so. They will tell you that they could not see them if they tried; but that is just what we, who have been taught of God so to look at the things which are not seen, can palpably discern. Oh, to look beyond death to "the home over there," beyond the swelling flood where souls that were loved of God from before the foundation of the world are safe with Jesus! I invite you to do so, especially if you have some dear ones there. Do you see them? Do you hear their music? Do you behold their joys? Are you going to be troubled about them any longer, after having realized their certain happiness? By-and-by there cometh the resurrection, and the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised. The very body over which you wept because it was to be given to the worm shall rise in matchless beauty in the likeness of its Lord. Will you not wipe your eyes dry now and submit to the Divine will, for surely the hope of the blessed resurrection makes amends for the loss by death?

Then there is to come the judgment, and you and I will be there. A soldier, some time ago, was in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where, according to tradition, the feet of the Messiah will rest in the day of judgment, and he sat on the stone and said, "And shall we all be present? I will sit here in that day." And there, absorbed with the thought, he looked up to the sky, and so distinctly did he realize the majestic vision of the day of judgment that he fell to the ground in amazement, oblivious of everything that was transpiring around him. Ah, if all of us were living in the light of the day of the Lord, what trifles these ebbs and flows, these ups and downs of passing circumstances would seem! How lightly we should bear sorrow, and how little we should reck of earthly fortunes and misfortunes if we could actually forecast the tremendous day when, with angels for witnesses and Christ for our Judge, we shall have to stand and be judged according to the things done in the body! Realize heaven, brothers and sisters, the heaven of the perfected manhood after the resurrection, the heaven where we shall see the Beloved's face, and day and night extol Him for ever. Oh, what is it to be poor? What is it to be sick? What would it be to go through a thousand deaths if we may but at last behold His glory, world without end? And think of hell, ye that forget God and revel in vanities; as your trembling spirit best may, think what it must be to be driven from His presence—to hear Him say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell." Ah! gilded world, how thou dost lose thy lustre when once I see the lurid glare of Tophet! Oh, painted harlot, how I see thy haggard ugliness when I hear the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth of those who chose the broad road and let the Lord the Saviour go! How I despise thee! As the vision opens before the eyes of faith, what zeal it kindles in my breast! Would to God I could induce some careless person here, who, nevertheless does believe the Scriptures, to sit down, if it were but for one half-hour, and try, believingly, to picture these things to his mind's eye. This sacred volume is full of pictures—pictures of things that shall shortly come to pass. Oh, that ye had the discernment to see them, not as weird fancies, but as veritable facts—the true sayings of God! The real thing is what you do not see to be real. The fiction is that which you account a solid fact. We are going down, each one of us to the grave, but God liveth for ever and ever. As for that body of yours in which you are sitting in this house, it is not a substance which shall abide, but it is a shadow which shall dissolve, mouldering into dust, and exhaling into water. Yet there lives within you what you cannot see—the real and true self; and that true self of yours will pass into another state, and through it into yet another, which shall be everlasting. And, oh, may God grant that your lot

may not be everlasting sorrow, but endless joy! In either case the things which are not seen are eternal. Gird up your loins and look at them like a man who will have ere long to dispel the illusions of sense and confront the verities of eternity, whether he will or no.

The Christian learns to *look on these things with the eye of delight*. Is it not to you, my dear brother in Christ, a delight to see God? I should not like to go to any place where I could not see my God. Yet He is not seen. Is it not a delicious thing to look forward to the heaven that is above—to the city of the blest? When the Lord indulges our faith with a view of that eternal joy—and some of us have known what it is—it has been too much for our weak capacity. We can laugh in our sleep when we dream of heaven, and we can sit down in the midst of pain and sorrow and feel as if we could not experience more joy than we possess, because our souls have looked on the pinnacles of our Father's palace, and seen the gleaming radiance of the twelve bejeweled foundations of the eternal city, where there is a house and a crown and a harp for every believer among us. The poor girl who goes home from this joyous place of worship to her own little cheerless room would feel miserable indeed if she looked at the shady side of her condition; but she says, "My Lord is in this room," and the place glows as if it were made of slabs of gold. She settles down and begins to think of the heaven that is hers, and she sees herself to be a king's daughter, a true princess, for she possesses in the glory-land a crown that no head can wear but hers, and there is a mansion provided for her which none can tenant but herself; happy, therefore, she well may be. Oh, beloved friends, learn to look at these things with intense delight, because they are ours in reversion now, and are soon to be ours in possession.

On the other hand, if you are not converted I would urge you to look upon the eternal future—for it is all eternal—with an intense dread, for without Christ what is there for you among the things which are not seen and are eternal but that which will make you wring your hands for poignant grief and gnash your teeth for bitter self-reproach if you are resolved to live and to die as you now are! You see not yet the future state of woe, but, like all the unseen things, it is eternal. There can be no termination to the misery of an immortal soul when once banished from God. I see no "larger hope" revealed in Scripture. Let my philosophical brethren conjecture what they will, where God speaks not I am silent; but I do see the dread forebodings of a death that never dies, and a fire that is never quenched. I would have every man who will not have Christ, or who dilly-dallies with salvation and runs risks with his soul, to look at what he risks. Face your future, O you who choose

your own destruction! That was a solemn morning's work for Abraham when he went to the place where he was wont to meet with God, and looked towards Sodom, and saw the smoke thereof going up as the smoke of a furnace. O Christians, you do well sometimes to look that way. Such a contemplation is not pleasant to flesh and blood. No, but it will do you good and make you feel fervent emotions of gratitude for your own redemption, and intense desires for the salvation of others. But come thou here, sinner! Come thou here! I must have thee here. Look, dost thou see it? Dost thou see it—the smoke of the flame which burneth for ever and ever? That flame is for thy burning if thou repent not. Dost thou see it as it reddens the heavens? That fire burns for thee if thou believest not in the Lord Jesus Christ. Wilt thou not look? If thou wilt not, thou wilt have to feel it! Thou canst not mitigate those woes by refusing to believe in their existence. It is the silly trick of the ostrich, so they say, when the hunter pursues it, to burrow its head in the sand and fancy itself safe; and this is what you are doing, with more than equal folly. I would fain recall you to reason. Look at the things which are not seen, for they are eternal. I met with a remark the other day which struck me forcibly: If a man had no worse pain than the toothache, if he knew that it would last for ever, he would desire to die that he might escape from it. When we have to endure any acute pain for a little while we begin to cry out for relief, and find it hard to be quiet, but were any pang to last eternally, the horror of such an expectation would even now be overwhelming! By the dread thought of eternity I implore you to see to it that your salvation is secured at once. Escape for thy life, my friend, and look not behind thee, for unless thou escape in time thy fate will be sealed for ever and ever. Those things which are not seen are eternal, and hell is one of them. Except thou escape now by faith in Jesus Christ thou never wilt escape. There is no reprieve nor respite in the world to come; pardon, therefore, should be sought at once.

By looking into the things which are not seen, Paul doubtless meant that *he looked to them with hope*. To his view the harvest was ripe, and he was eager to reap it. I invite all believers to be looking with ardent hope for the things that are eternal. Long for the bright appearing of the Lord. Long for your translation unto the city of glory. Expect it: watch for it. It is on the way. You may be much nearer than you think. You may be in heaven before next year; indeed, you may be there before to-morrow morning. Light is fading from the earth. Dear friend, look toward heaven. Look toward eternal things. Make it a point to look unto thy future home. Should there be any young man here who is not twenty-one,

and he knows that when he comes of age he is to be squire of a village, own a park and enjoy a rich heritage, I will be bound to say he has often forestalled the time because he is sure of his title. If any one of you had a legacy left him of a large estate, he would be off this week to have a look at it. One likes to look at one's own. Christian, be sure to survey thine own possession in the skies. Read much the book of God, which tells thee of thy future inheritance. Say to thyself, "This is all mine. Why should not I begin to enjoy it? Did not the Israelites fetch bunches of the grapes of Eschol before they entered Canaan? And why should not I?" I hope you will full often enjoy foretastes of bliss, till you can sing with John Ber-ridge,

"Too long, alas, I vainly sought," etc.

What a sanctifying influence such anticipations would have upon you! "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." Pursue eternal things with concentrated mind. You must look right on to the end of the race for the prize. The runner does not cast a glance to the right or to the left, or to the flowers which bespangle the pathway, but keeps his eye on the prize, and that helps him to run. He stretches every nerve to reach the end and win the prize. Brothers and sisters, make eternal things the scope of your life at all times. This I have told you is the literal sense of the original Greek. Make them that for which you plot and plan; that for which you think and consider; that for which you live and act: throw your whole being into eternal things. Are we, therefore, to neglect business, you may ask? God forbid! Serve God in business. To leave business or to do business as if it were not a part of your religion would be a departure from your Master's will and not a fulfilment of it. Sanctify your commonest action to the glory of God. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Have an eye always to eternity. Keep your thoughts upon that. Eat and drink as for eternity, remembering that what you eat and drink perisheth, and he that eats will perish too. It is "earth to earth" whenever we eat, therefore let us not make gods of our bellies. When thou enjoyest any earthly thing, do it as in the light of eternity, and say, "I am plucking a flower that must fade. This is not a diamond that will remain with me, always glistening; it is only a bright daisy; it looks very pretty at the moment, but it will soon fade. The children gather it, but soon let it fall, and so do I." Put not thy soul into that which is sensual, at thy peril. See that thou pursuest with all thy might things spiritual. As for things transient, commit them to God's providence. Do thy best to honor God in the use of this world's currency, but make it not thy wealth. Look at Jonah sitting under his gourd which screened him from the scorching sun with its broad

leaves. Think of Jonah as he said to himself, "How happy I am under this arbor! How cool it makes me!" He was content and comfortable, but God prepared a worm. The worm destroyed the wretched gourd. Though it seemed so beautiful before, it soon became only fit to be pulled down and cast upon the dunghill. It may soon be the same with your earthly comforts. If you make your gourd your god it will do you no good. Gourds are well enough, but they are not good when you put them in the place of eternal comforts.

I finish with this. Treat the things present as if they were not, and live thou like an heir of heaven's invisible but substantial joys. Higher and better things are in store for thee. God bless thee by his blessed Spirit with blessed foretastes of the blessed hereafter. **Amen.**

The Burial of Sarah.

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

Gen. xxiii.

IT has been remarked as a singular circumstance that Sarah is the only woman whose age is mentioned in the Scriptures. At the time of her death her only son Isaac was thirty-seven years old, she herself being ninety at the time of his birth. We know little about Sarah except that she was comely to look upon, somewhat severe toward Hagar her handmaid, and that she was the mother of Isaac. This seems quite little when mentioned in one sentence, but really it comes to a great deal in the full working out. Her good looks made traveling rather dangerous for Abraham. Her conduct toward Hagar showed her temper and moral quality, and her motherhood of Isaac made her the mother of all believers—(1 Peter iii: 16). How large an oak may come out of one acorn! As we are about to attend the burial of Sarah, we should reflect a little upon the lessons of her life before we leave the cave of the field of Machpelah, which is in Hebron in the land of Canaan.

Some of us have to live in a kind of reflected lustre and fame. We are next to nothing in ourselves, but our brother is famous, our uncle is influential; we have not seen the Queen ourselves, but we have seen a man who has seen her. Sarah was not much in herself, but she was the wife of Abraham. The window of your cottage is a very small one, but it looks out upon a park three thousand acres large. Some of us get our lustre at third or fourth hand, and of course it gets paler and paler as it comes along. John Stradwick kept a shop on Snow Hill; John Stradwick was the first deacon of one of the London Congregational churches; John Stradwick let a room or two above his shop to lodgers; one of his lodgers was called John Bunyan; John Stradwick had a daughter, and that daughter married Robert Braggs, and Robert Braggs was one of the pastors of this church! I like to think of one of my predecessors and his wife being with Bunyan in his last illness, and getting a grip of the tinker's hand now and then.

This is a long way to have to fetch one's water, I admit; but when it is brought to me it is like water from the well of Bethlehem, and there is none like it! After all, it is something to be in the tail of a kite if the kite be beautiful and a good flyer. Even Boswell has become as one of the rings of Saturn. I should account it a fine thing if I could have an hour's talk with one of Shakespeare's servants, or spend a whole day with Luther's sexton. If I made right use of my time, I should feel that

I had been in high company and had touched the threshold of immortal fame. Now, these are only the lower applications of a principle universal in its operation and influence, and which reaches its highest point in Christian fellowship. I can come to One in the touch of the hem of whose garment there is eternal virtue! Poor though we be and nameless, yet if we be in Christ Jesus, we come to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. Nothing in ourselves, we are yet kings and priests unto God! Our torch is lighted at the sun.

Some people have to wait a long time for their blessings. Sarah was ninety years old when Isaac was born. This thing itself is merely accidental, but the principle which is under it is living and beneficent. If we have the true life in our hearts, not one of us has yet seen his best days. Physically, we may be on the wane; but spiritually we may win our greatest victories actually on the day of death. You have not yet got the best your brain can give. There is a finer wine in your heart than has yet been crushed out. Do not close the shutters; rather break out another window, for the light of the sun is yet plentiful. You may bring forth fruit in old age, and be fat and flourishing until the last. You have not got God's best. He keeps the good wine for by and by. I hear your sigh and your groan, and for every one of them you shall yet have a hymn or a loud psalm. Your great prayer shall be answered; the prayer that drags your heart out in passionate entreaty for the runaway boy, for the lost girl, for the healing of a wound in the spirit never told of to mortal ear! Live in this hope, and this hope will keep you young. Sarah laughed at ninety, and made all her friends laugh in her late-come joy.

And now that Sarah is dead, Abraham came to mourn and to weep for her. But was not Abraham a man of faith? Yes; but he was a man of feeling, too, and his piety did not make his heart hard. But was not Isaac, his son, alive? Yes; but a love ninety years old, and tested in many a sharp flame, was not to be given up lightly. It is a hard thing to part with those we have known longest and best. When such parting comes, "'tis the survivor dies"; memory is quickened into strange vividness; the past life comes up and passes its days before the eyes in all their variety of color and service. I hear Abraham talking to himself: "Oh, how sad is this loneliness; how awful is the stillness of this silence! I can talk to Isaac, but not as I did to his mother: there are some eighty years of life that he knows nothing about. Sarah and I wandered together, talked out our hearts to one another, planned and dreamed and suffered in one common experience, and there she lies, a stranger among strangers, cold and silent forever!

And Abraham wept! The man who slew the great kings wept! The man whose name is to endure as long as the sun wept! *Jesus* wept! Blessed will those of us be who have not to weep over neglect, harshness, bitterness; over speeches that made the heart ache, over selfishness that hastened the very death we mourn! If you would have few tears by and by, be kind now; if you would have a happy future, create a gracious present. Make your homes happy; banish from the sacred enclosure of the family all meanness, hardness, suspicion and unkindness, that when the dark day comes, as come it will too soon, your deep and tender sorrow may not be mixed with the bitterness of self-reproach.

This is a sharp variety of experience for Abraham. In the last incident how brave he was, and what a kingliness dignified even the stoop of his sorrow as he went with Isaac to the altar! What is the difference between his case then and his case now? It is the difference between *doing* God's will and *suffering* it. A wonderful difference, as we all know! So long as we have something to do, something to call us from pensive meditation and set us to hard strife, we bear up with hopeful courage; but when the strife ceases, and we are left alone with the wreck it has wrought, we often express our emotion in tears which never came during all the battle. Such an instance as this goes far toward proving that Abraham's faith was as human as his sorrow. If we can join him in grief, why not in faith? If we thought him nearly divine on Moriah, we may see how human he is in Hebron. As for ourselves, we can fight resolutely; can we suffer patiently? We are heroes whilst the sound of the trumpet is maddening the air; what are we when laid up as wounded soldiers? The patient, uncomplaining sufferer, who for months or years has been waiting for her Lord without ever suggesting that His steps were tardy, may have as strong a faith as Abraham had when he held the knife over his son. All the world's faith is not historic. To-day has its chronicles of trust and patience and hope quite as instructive and thrilling as those which are recorded in the Bible. It is too early to read them through, or to comprehend all their sad yet glorious meaning; but every syllable is accepted and honored of God. We often wish that we were as good as the holy men of old; it will be a poor thing, however, if we are not better than the best man in any earlier dispensation. Among all that were born of woman there had not appeared a greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he. So may we be greater than Abraham, by reason of Jesus Christ's promise that we should not only have life, but have it "more abundantly." That some of the older generations might have greater gifts is not denied; but none of them had opportunities of having greater graces. They

had special inspiration, we have the general baptism of the Spirit; they saw the unrisen light, we see the sun in a cloudless zenith. My opinion is that God never had better children upon the earth than He has at this moment; never was there such force of life, never such loyalty to the kingdom of heaven. We do not, then, set forth Abraham as a divine model; we call up his history to see its points common with our own, to study the unchangeableness of God, and to take an estimate of the development of human destiny.

Look at Abraham buying a grave! True, he buys a field and a cave, and all the trees that were in the field, and in all the borders round about; but, expand the list as we may, it was all for the sake of a place to bury his dead. The good man is forced into such commerce as well as the bad; the best man of his age is here bargaining for burial ground. I need not remind a Christian congregation of the advantage which a good man enjoys under such circumstances. To him the place of Christian sepulchre is not a wilderness given over to the desolation of everlasting winter; it is a garden, full of roots, that shall come up in infinite beauty in the summer that is yet to be. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The law of mortality will operate until the close of this dispensation; all lower life has been given over to death; but death itself has been devoted by an unchangeable covenant to be destroyed by life. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Meanwhile, we require graves. Our houses are overshadowed by a temporary destroyer; we are smitten and impoverished by the angel of death. All this we know as a matter of fact; in talking thus I trouble you with the tritest truisms; but have we turned our knowledge to account? Have we read the meaning of the shadow that lies along the whole path of life? Have we so balanced our proportions as to give to each its honest due? Have we not, on the contrary, forgotten our own mortality even in the very act of talking of other men's death? What need there is then that we should see this transaction between Abraham and Ephron: listen to the words of the covenant, and ponder well that in return for four hundred shekels of silver Abraham gets a burying-place!

"From the stars of heaven, and the flowers of earth,
From the pageant of power, and the voice of mirth,
From the mists of morn on the mountains' brow,
From childhood's song, and affection's vow,
From all save that o'er which the soul bears sway
Breathes but one record—passing away."

The manner in which the children of Heth answered Abraham should attract the most appreciative notice: "Hear us,

my Lord ; thou art a mighty prince among us ; in the choice of our sepulchres bury the dead ; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." How these incidental strokes of pathos attest the oneness of the human heart ! Circumstances test the true quality of men. Irreverence in the presence of grief is an infallible sign of the deepest degeneracy ; it marks the ultimate deterioration of the human heart. On the other hand, to be chastened by sorrow, to be moved into generous pity and helpfulness, is to show that there is still something in the man on which the kingdom of Jesus Christ may be built. Never despair of any man who is capable of generous impulses. Put no man down as incurably bad who will share his one loaf with the hungry or give shelter to a lost little one. Poor and crude may be his formal creed, very dim and pitifully inadequate his view of scholastic theology ; but there is a root in him which may be developed into much beauty and fruitfulness. For this reason I cannot overlook the genial humanity and simple gracefulness of this act of the Hittites.

Man's final requirement of man is a grave. We may go down to the grave in one of two very different ways. Our grave may be respected, or it may be passed by as a dishonored spot. We may live so as to be much missed, or we may live so as to leave the least possible vacancy ; whichever way it be, we should remember that there is no repentance in the grave—the dead man cannot obliterate the past.

Abraham mourned for Sarah. What then ? Consecration to God's purposes does not eradicate our deep human love ; say rather that it heightens, refines, sanctifies it ! Every father is more a father in proportion as he loves and serves the great Father in heaven. We should be on our guard against any system of religion or philosophy that seeks to cool the fervor of natural and lawful love. It may be very majestic not to shed tears ; but it is most inhuman, most ungodly. We have heard of Abraham mourning, of David crying bitterly, of the Saviour allowing His feet to be washed with a sinner's tears, and of Jesus Christ weeping ; but who ever heard of the devil being broken down in pity or mournfulness ? Christianity educates our humanity, not deadens it ; and when we are in tears it helps us to see through them nearly into heaven.